

Access and Participation Plan 2021-22 to 2025-26

1. Assessment of performance

Many nationally under-represented groups remain well represented at the University of Bolton. Progress is generally being made against the targets, although percentage gap analysis can be volatile, particularly when applied to small populations.

We have focused on areas most important to the University, whilst also considering National priorities, in our efforts to improve Access, Continuation, Attainment and Progression amongst under-represented groups of students.

Tables within the APP (with charts for additional clarity) are intended to stress current gaps within the University data, understand the same gaps at National level, and help determine the most important priorities for the University. Current gaps within the University's student population are our primary focus, yet we are, of course, monitoring progress against National data and targets.

The table below shows the latest published data against targets set in the previous APP. Explanatory narrative follows, which refers to the 2018-19 data (we also take note of the latest 2019-20 data for some internal analysis).

We use the IMD (2015) set of measures in this APP, though we noted the addition of IMD (2019) to the APP Dashboard in March 2021. We are now committing to move to the IMD(2019) measures through 2021, reporting to the OfS at the next Monitoring Return in January 2022.

Specific targets	Between	From (2020-21)	To (2024-25)	Reference Value	OfS (2018-19)
To reduce the gap in good degree outcomes (1 st and 2:1)	FT UG Young students from POLAR4Q1 (P4Q1) and POLAR4Q5 (P4Q5)	10%	5%	10%	18%
	FT UG students from IMD (2015) Q1 and IMD (2015) Q5	25%	15%	25%	17pp
	FT UG Black students and White students	30%	15%	30%	18pp
	FT UG Asian students and White students	18%	3%	18%	18%
To remove the gap in continuation	FT UG Black students and White students	4%	0%	4%	4%
	FT UG Asian students and White students	8%	0%	8%	3%
To reduce the gap in continuation	FT UG Mixed ethnicity students and White	9%	2%	9%	-3%
To reduce the gap in graduate level employment	PT UG IMD (2015) Q1 and IMD (2015) Q5 students	17.5%	7.5%	17.5%	15%
	FT UG Asian and White students	16%	6%	16%	16%

A 'Structural and Unexplained Gaps' modelling project is continuing, as identified in the previous APP. We carried out an initial investigation of data, but the next stage of the project was paused for several months due to the Pandemic. The University did however appoint an external consultant and some initial progress was made; following clarification and interaction with the OfS on the statistical methods used and issues surrounding application to a single institution. This project will continue in 2021 by the now in-post Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, with completion of the initial review (as an on-going project) by the end of the 2020-21 Academic year.

1.1 Higher education participation, household income, or socioeconomic status

Access – data analysis from the OfS Dataset (2018-19)

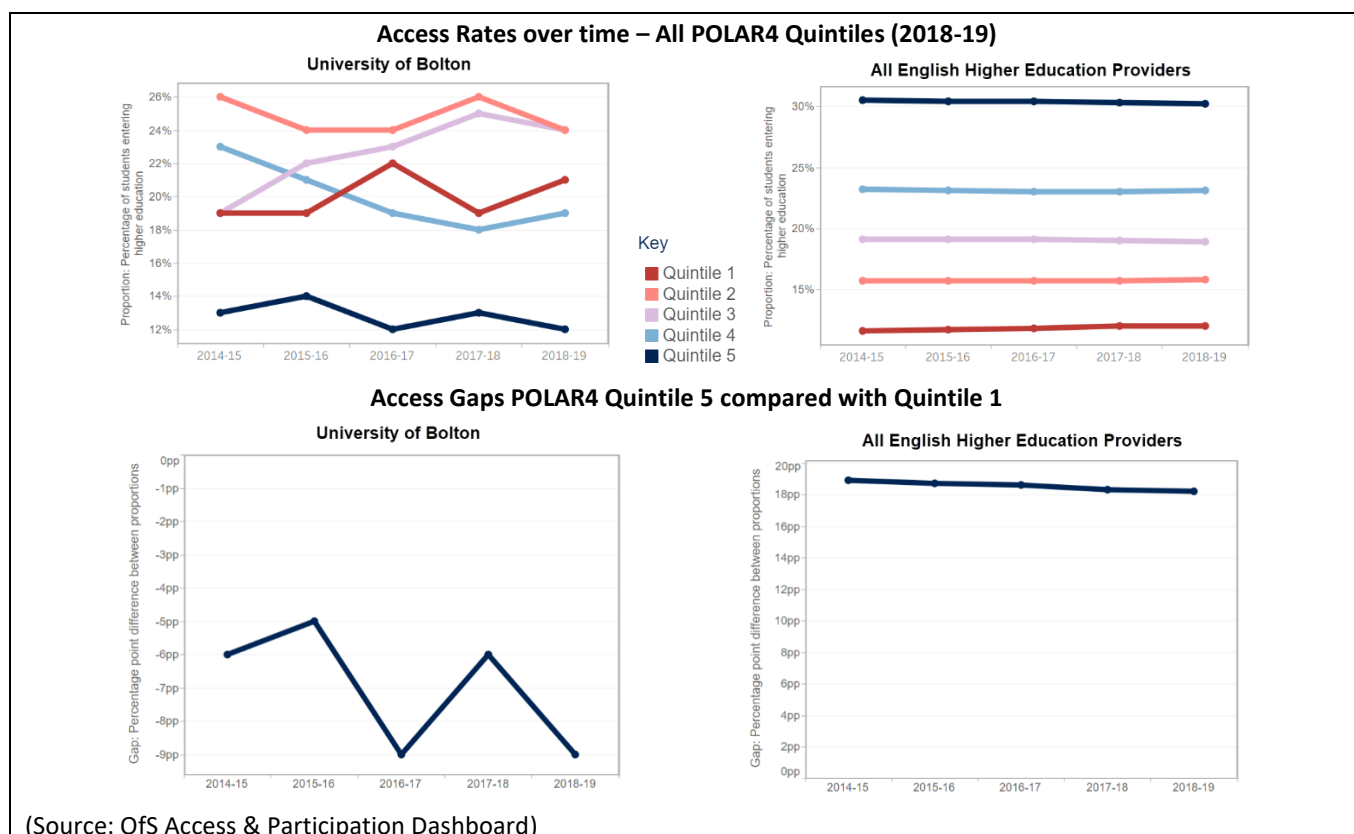
The University of Bolton (UoB) performed significantly better than the national figures for **full-time** POLAR4Q1-3 and for IMD (2015) Q1 students, though less well than the national figures within the higher quintiles.

Access by Polar4 Quintile.

POLAR4 Quintile	UoB	National	Gap to National
Q1	21%	12%	-9pp
Q2	24%	16%	-8pp
Q3	24%	19%	-5pp
Q4	19%	23%	+4pp
Q5	12%	30%	+18pp
P4Q5-Q1 Gap	-9pp	+18pp	

Access by IMD (2015) Quintile

IMD (2015) Quintile	UoB	National	Gap to National
Q1	48%	22%	-26pp
Q2	20%	20%	0pp
Q3	12%	18%	+6pp
Q4	11%	19%	+8pp
Q5	9%	21%	+12pp
IMDQ5-Q1 Gap	-39pp	-1pp	



(Source: OfS Access & Participation Dashboard)

UoB is performing well compared with the National averages when looking at the gaps between POLAR4Q5 and POLAR4Q1. Indeed, over the past 5 years there is a slight improvement from -6pp to -9pp. For IMD(2015) data, our Access Gap over time has remained stable at around -39pp.

The previous APP identified a gap (using internal data as OfS data is incomplete) of 19 percentage points (pp) between P4Q1 (9%) and P4Q5 (28%) for part-time (PT) students and noted a commitment to monitor that measure. Based on

a small population in 2017-18, changes in the number of students cause large fluctuations in the pp participation gaps.

Internal consideration of the 2018-19 data showed that this situation was reversed, with the gap moving to -8pp, though in absolute terms a difference of just 14 students. Internal analysis of the 2019-20 data shows just 6 students so gaps will continue to fluctuate. The numbers are so small that it is not meaningful to consider them in percentage terms.

Proportionally, there were even more PT entrants from IMDQ5 in 2018-19 than previously, moving the gap from -16pp the previous year to -33pp. Caution is needed as the overall PT population size fell from 270 to 180. There were 6 more PT IMDQ1 students in 2019-20 than in 2018-19.

The University is very successful in attracting students from deprived backgrounds, and we will continue to monitor the situation regarding part-time students.

Success – data analysis from the OfS Dataset

Non-continuation (2017-18)

Continuation rates across all quintiles are an internal priority for the University. Gaps between full-time P4Q1&5 and IMDQ1&5 increased slightly, are comparable with national gaps, and showing improvement in absolute terms from 2013-14 to 2017-18.

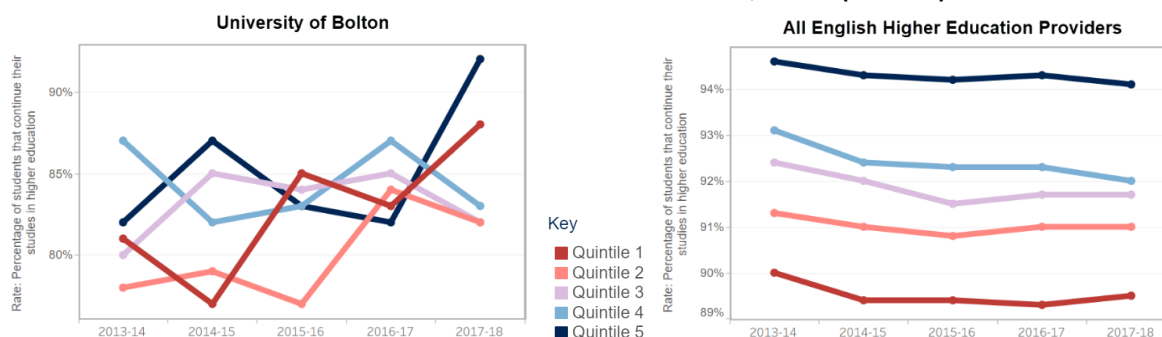
Continuation by POLAR4

POLAR4 Quintile	UoB	National
Q1	88%	90%
Q2	82%	91%
Q3	82%	92%
Q4	83%	92%
Q5	92%	94%
P4Q5-Q1 Gap	+4pp	+4pp

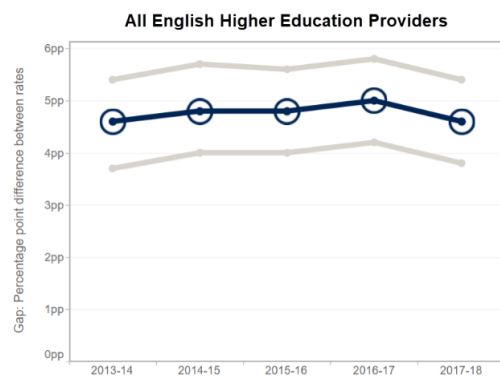
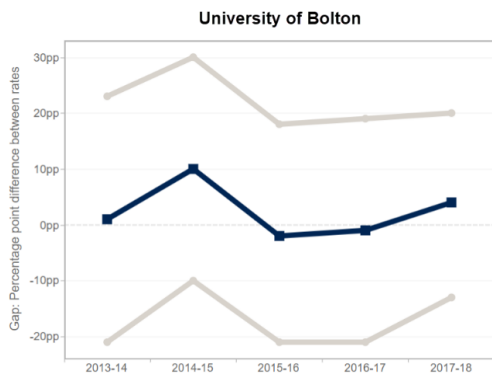
Continuation by IMD (2015)

IMD (2015) Quintile	UoB	National
Q1	83%	86%
Q2	86%	88%
Q3	87%	90%
Q4	86%	92%
Q5	91%	94%
IMDQ5-Q1 Gap	+8pp	+8pp

Continuation Rates over time – All POLAR4 Quintiles (2017-18)



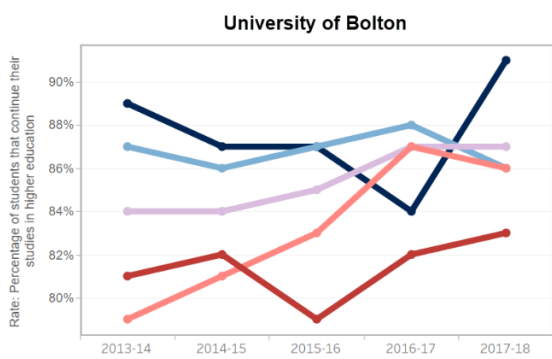
Continuation Gaps – POLAR4 Quintile 5 compared with Quintile 1



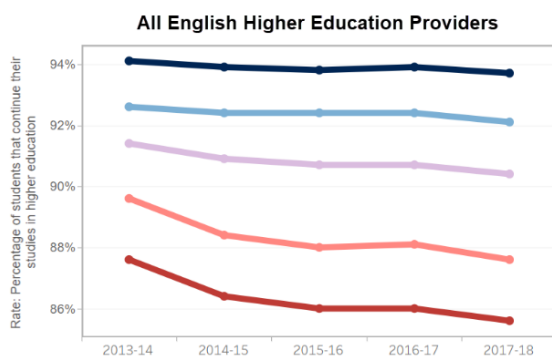
(Source: OfS Access & Participation Dashboard)

UoB Continuation gap P4Q5 to P4Q1 is averaging around zero and this also compares favourably with the National data.

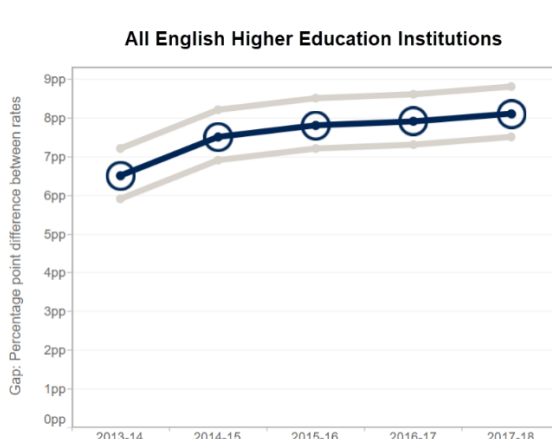
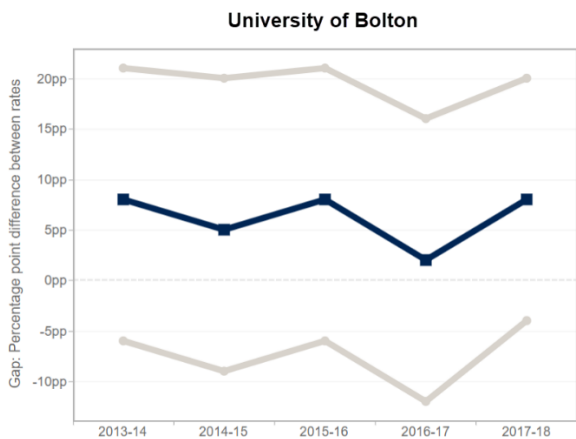
Continuation Rates over time – All IMD (2015) Quintiles (2017-18)



Key
 ■ Quintile 1
 ■ Quintile 2
 ■ Quintile 3
 ■ Quintile 4
 ■ Quintile 5



Continuation Gaps – IMD (2015) Quintile 5 compared with Quintile 1



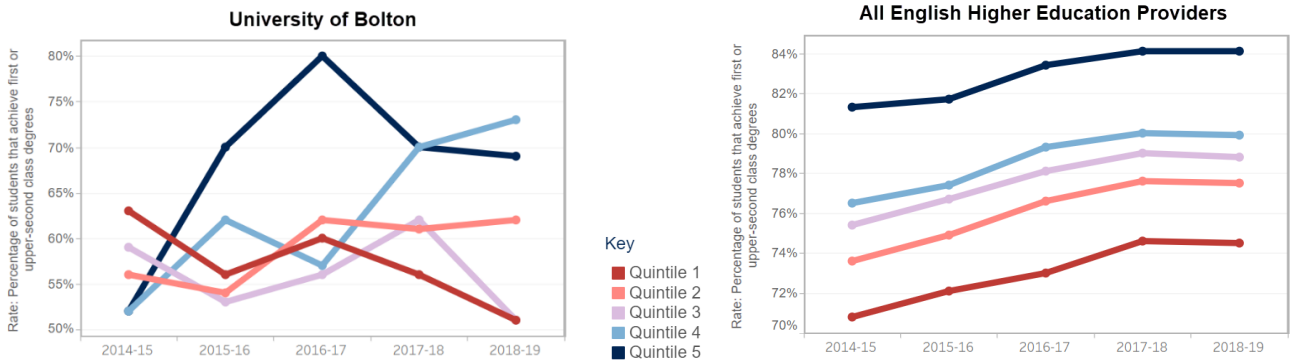
(Source: OfS Access & Participation Dashboard)

UoB (IMD2015) absolute values over the past 5 years are trailing the National data, though have improved for all quintiles between 2013-14 and 2017-18. Our P4Q5-P4Q1 gap has averaged 5pp over this period, though the latest data point is in line with the National data (which has increased over this same period). Continuation remains a priority for the University.

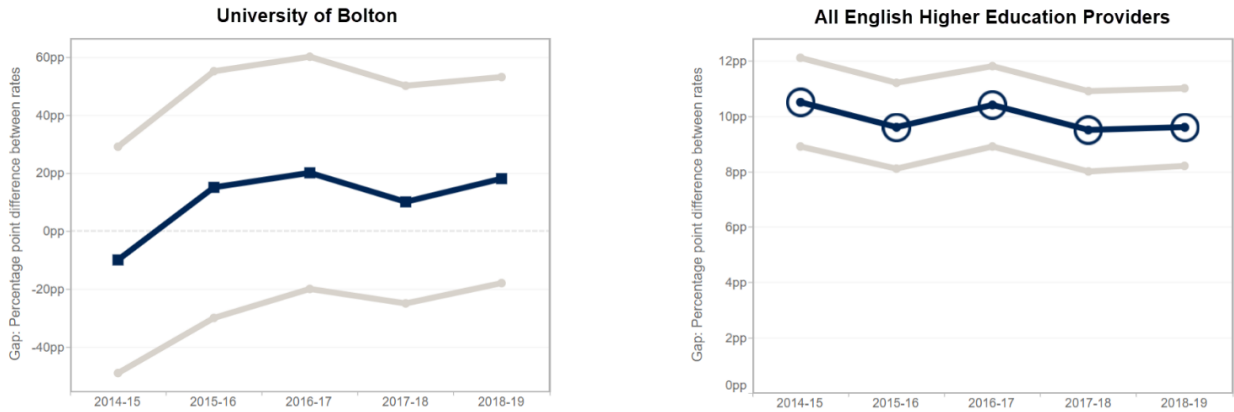
Attainment (2018-19)

UoB fell below national rates across all quintiles. The University's attainment gaps for P4 and IMD were higher than national rates with a gap of around 15pp for the last 4 years between P4Q5 and P4Q1 (compared to 10pp nationally) and a gap at around 20pp between IMDQ5 and IMDQ1 (compared to 18pp nationally). Consequently, both these attainment gaps are targets within this APP.

Attainment Rates over time – All POLAR4 Quintiles (2018-19)



Attainment Gaps – POLAR4 Quintile 5 compared to Quintile 1



(Source: OfS Access & Participation Dashboard)

Whilst in absolute terms P4Q4&5 have improved, there has been little movement in P4Q1-3 and we have a roughly stable gap of around 20pp P4Q5-Q1 whereas the National data has a 10pp gap and absolute values having increased for all quintiles over the same period.

Whilst not statistically significant, the P4 gap widened in 2018-19 compared to 2017-18, although was smaller than the 2016-17 gap. The actual rates were Q1 51% (population of 100) and Q5 69% (population of 60), giving a gap of 18pp. Internal 2019-20 data shows this to be a ‘blip’ with the subsequent year’s gap reducing in line with the target. We will continue to monitor this.

The IMD gap for 2018-19 was consistent with the APP target. Internal analysis for 2019-20 indicated attainment for both IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 improved substantially, which would generally be considered positive, although sadly the rate for IMDQ5 has increased more than IMDQ1 and so the gap has widened. Therefore, it is proposed that the current targets will be retained.

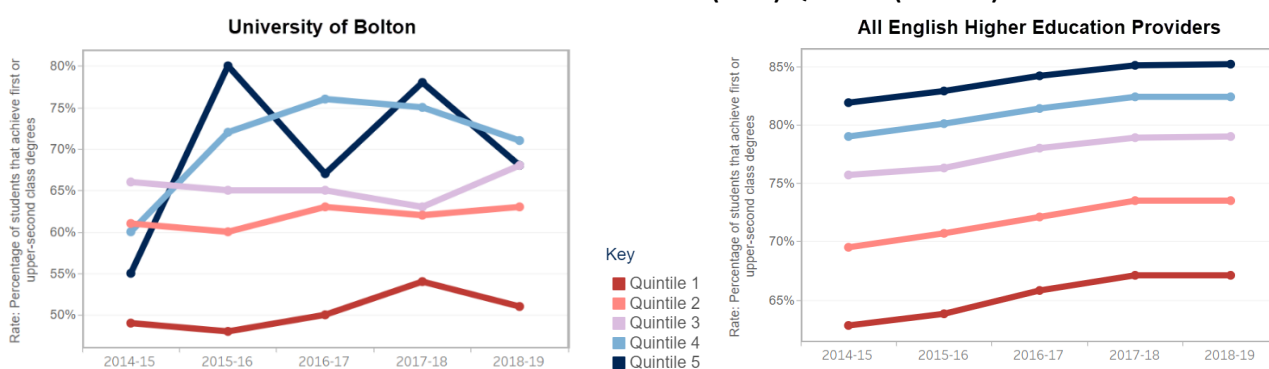
Attainment by POLAR4 Quintiles

POLAR4 Quintile	UoB	National
Q1	51%	75%
Q2	62%	78%
Q3	51%	79%
Q4	73%	80%
Q5	69%	84%
P4Q5-Q1 Gap	+18pp	+9pp

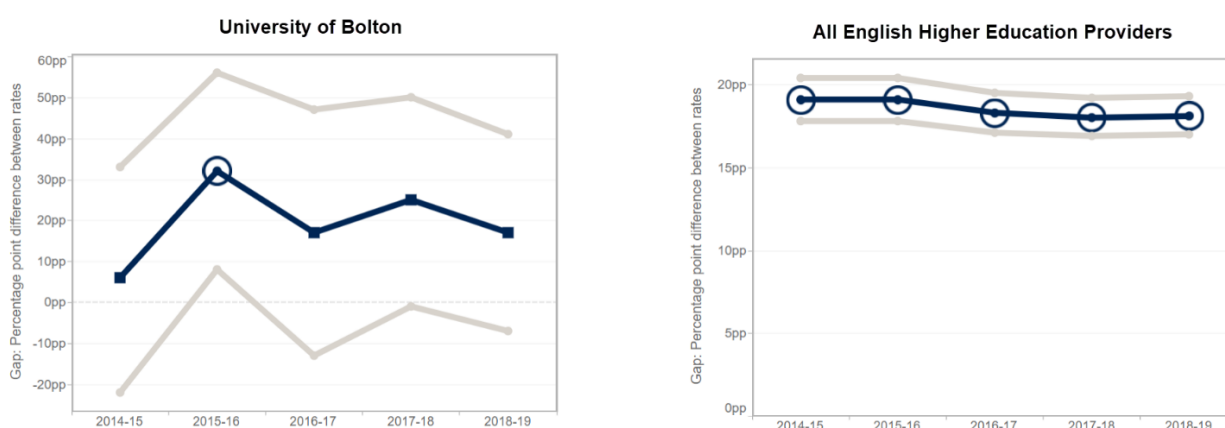
Attainment by IMD (2015)

IMD (2015) Quintile	UoB	National
Q1	51%	67%
Q2	63%	74%
Q3	68%	79%
Q4	71%	82%
Q5	68%	85%
IMDQ5-Q1 Gap	+17pp	+18pp

Attainment Rates Over Time – All IMD(2015) Quintiles (2018-19)



Attainment Gaps IMD Quintile 5 compared to Quintile 1



(Source: OfS Access & Participation Dashboard)

Progression to employment or further study – data analysis from the OfS Dataset (2016-17) and UoB Internal Data

For FT, we noted lower UoB rates across all quintiles than nationally and so this continues to be an internal priority of the University. The gaps between P4Q1-Q5 (at around 5pp, consistent with national rates) and IMDQ1-Q5 (at around 4pp, better than national (7pp) are not currently an explicit focus for this APP.

Progression by POLAR4

POLAR4 Quintile	UoB	National
Q1	50%	69%
Q2	54%	71%
Q3	51%	72%
Q4	55%	72%
Q5	55%	75%
P4Q5-Q1 Gap	+5pp	+6pp

Progression by IMD (2015)

IMD (2015) Quintile	UoB	National
Q1	60%	69%
Q2	62%	71%
Q3	65%	73%
Q4	55%	75%
Q5	64%	76%
IMDQ5-Q1 Gap	+4pp	+7pp

In addition, HESA Performance Indicators show that the UoB Employment (at all skill levels) and Further Study rates are lower than national rates. This also continues to be an internal priority of the University. We see gaps between P4Q1-Q5 of 5pp and between IMDQ1-Q5 of 11pp.

These will be reviewed further following transition from DLHE to GOS, once more GOS data is available.

Employment & Further Study by POLAR4

POLAR4 Quintile	UoB
Q1	77%
Q2	89%
Q3	80%
Q4	83%
Q5	82%
P4Q5-Q1 Gap	+5pp

Employment & Further Study by IMD

IMD (2015) Quintile	UoB
Q1	81%
Q2	87%
Q3	85%
Q4	87%
Q5	92%
IMDQ5-Q1 Gap	+11pp

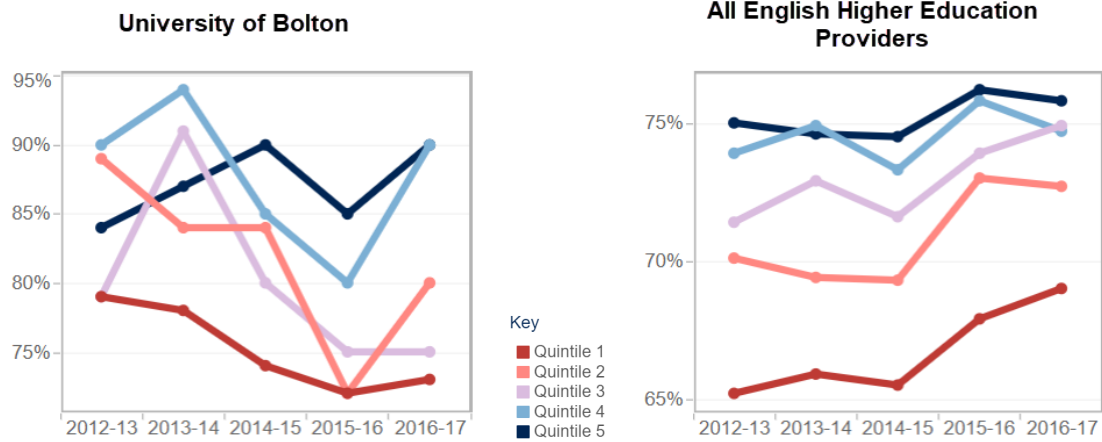
Progression is a general focus for the University. Our P5Q1-Q5 gap has averaged around zero the past 5 years, though the last 2 years have been around 5%. The National gap is 6pp. This will continue to be closely monitored, though no target is being set at this time.

For PT, UoB performed better than nationally for the progression of students from all IMD quintiles, although the gap between IMDQ1&5 was higher than national rates and so has been included as an APP target. This will be reviewed further following transition from DLHE to GOS, once more GOS data is available.

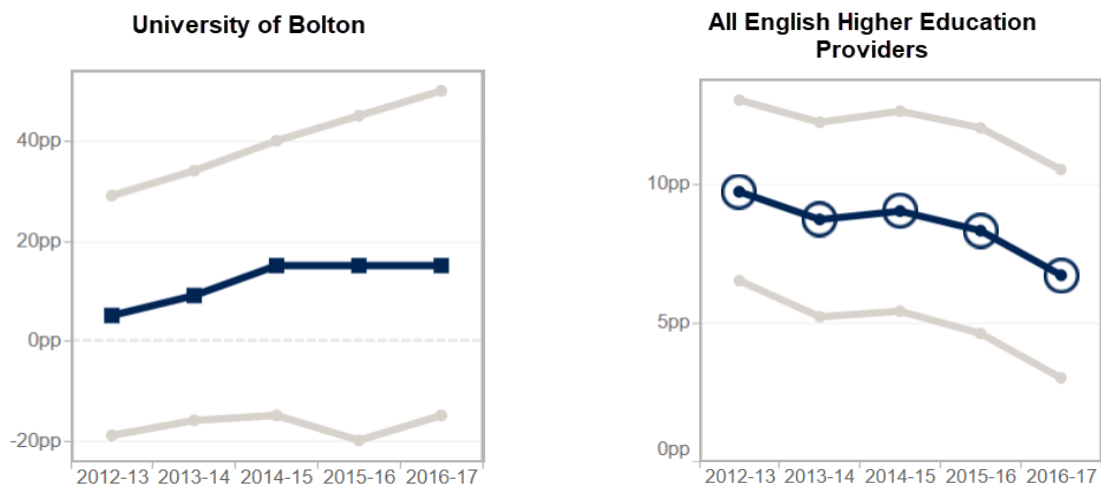
Part-Time Student Progression by IMD (2016-17)

IMD (2015) Quintile	UoB	National
Q1	73%	69%
Q2	80%	73%
Q3	75%	75%
Q4	90%	75%
Q5	90%	78%
IMDQ5-Q1 Gap	+17pp	+9pp

Part-Time Progression Rates over time – All IMD Quintiles (2016-17)



Progression Gaps – IMD Quintile 5 compared with Quintile 1



(Source: OfS Access & Participation Dashboard)

1.2 Black, Asian and minority ethnic students (BAME)

Access – data analysis from the OfS Dataset (2018-19)

The proportion of UoB full-time BAME students in 2018-19 was **36.2%** compared to **31.3%** nationally.

Access by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	UoB	National	Gap to National
Asian	16%	15%	-1pp
Black	5%	7%	+2pp
Mixed	6%	5%	-1pp
Other	1%	2%	+1pp
White	72%	71%	-1pp

Our **part-time** UoB BAME student population is small, so small changes in student numbers affect trends significantly. Data reported from the OfS dashboards removes small populations therefore UoB data is suppressed. However, internal data without suppression showed the proportion for 2018-19 at 21.1% which compared to 14.4% nationally. We will continue to monitor the position but will set no new targets at this stage.

Success – data analysis from the OfS Dataset

Non-continuation (2017-18)

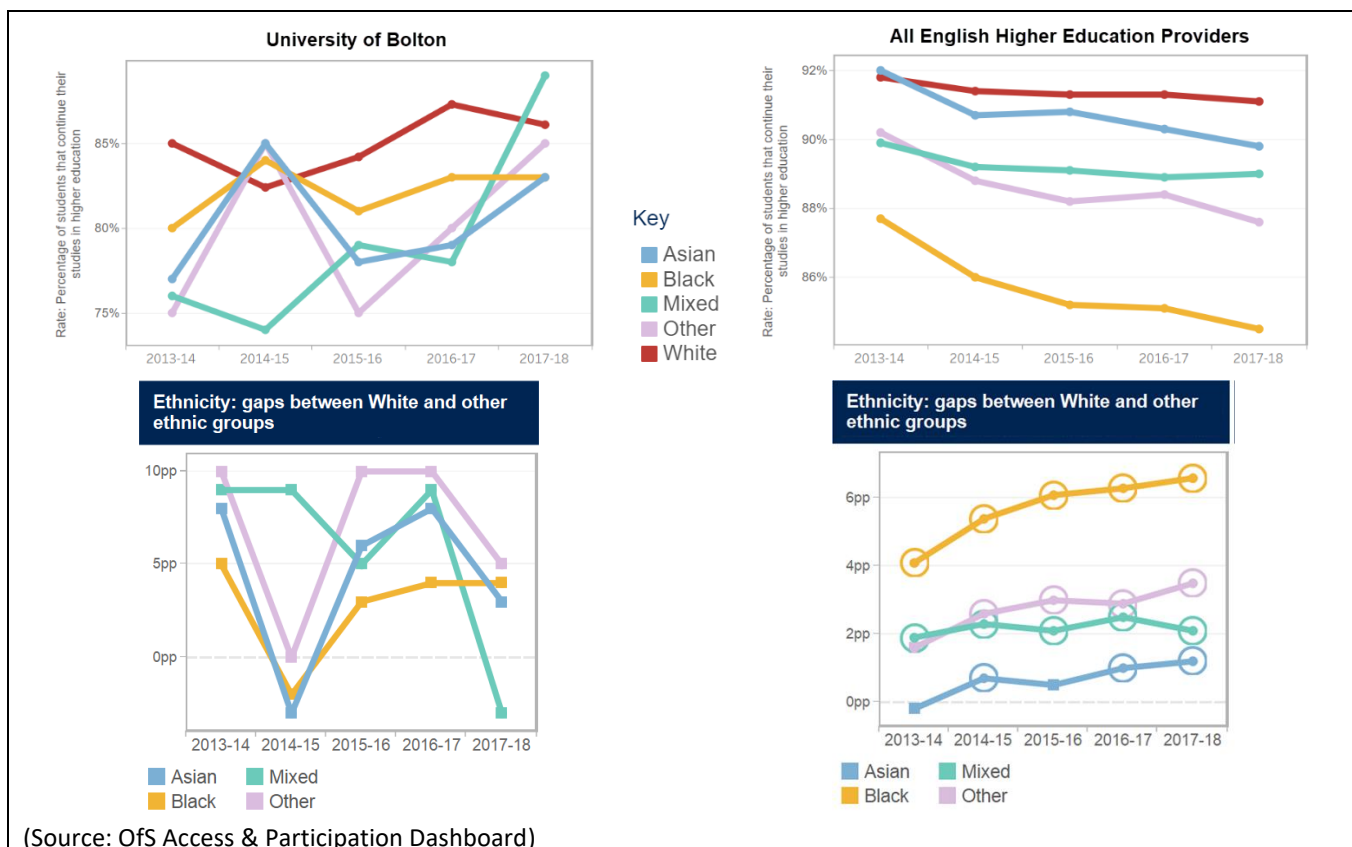
Continuation rates overall for UoB showed an improving trend in each of the ethnic groups, compared to a gradual decline nationally. UoB data showed a closing of the gap compared with white students in the most recently published data. Various targets have been set aimed at reducing the gaps between ethnicities:

- a) FT UG Black students and White students (last year remained stable at 4pp, better than the national figure. Internal data indicates that Black students outperformed White students in 2019-20)
- b) FT UG Asian students and White students (reduced from 8pp to 3pp, although internal data indicates this may deteriorate for 2019-20)
- c) FT UG Mixed ethnicity students and White students (reduced from +9 to -3pp. With a population of only 90 for 2019-20, internal data indicates that this may narrow, but Mixed will still outperform White).

These are generally consistent with the current APP targets, but performance is volatile. Given recent performance, the targets have been adjusted to make them more ambitious. The Black student target will seek to maintain parity. Following improved performance, the target for students of Mixed ethnicity will be removed, with a commitment to seek to maintain Black and Asian parity with White.

Continuation by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	UoB	National	UoB Gap to White	National Gap to White
Asian	83%	90%	+3pp	+1.2pp
Black	83%	85%	+4pp	+6.6pp
Mixed	89%	89%	-3pp	+2.1pp
Other	85%	89%	+1pp	+3.7pp
White	86%	91%		



(Source: OfS Access & Participation Dashboard)

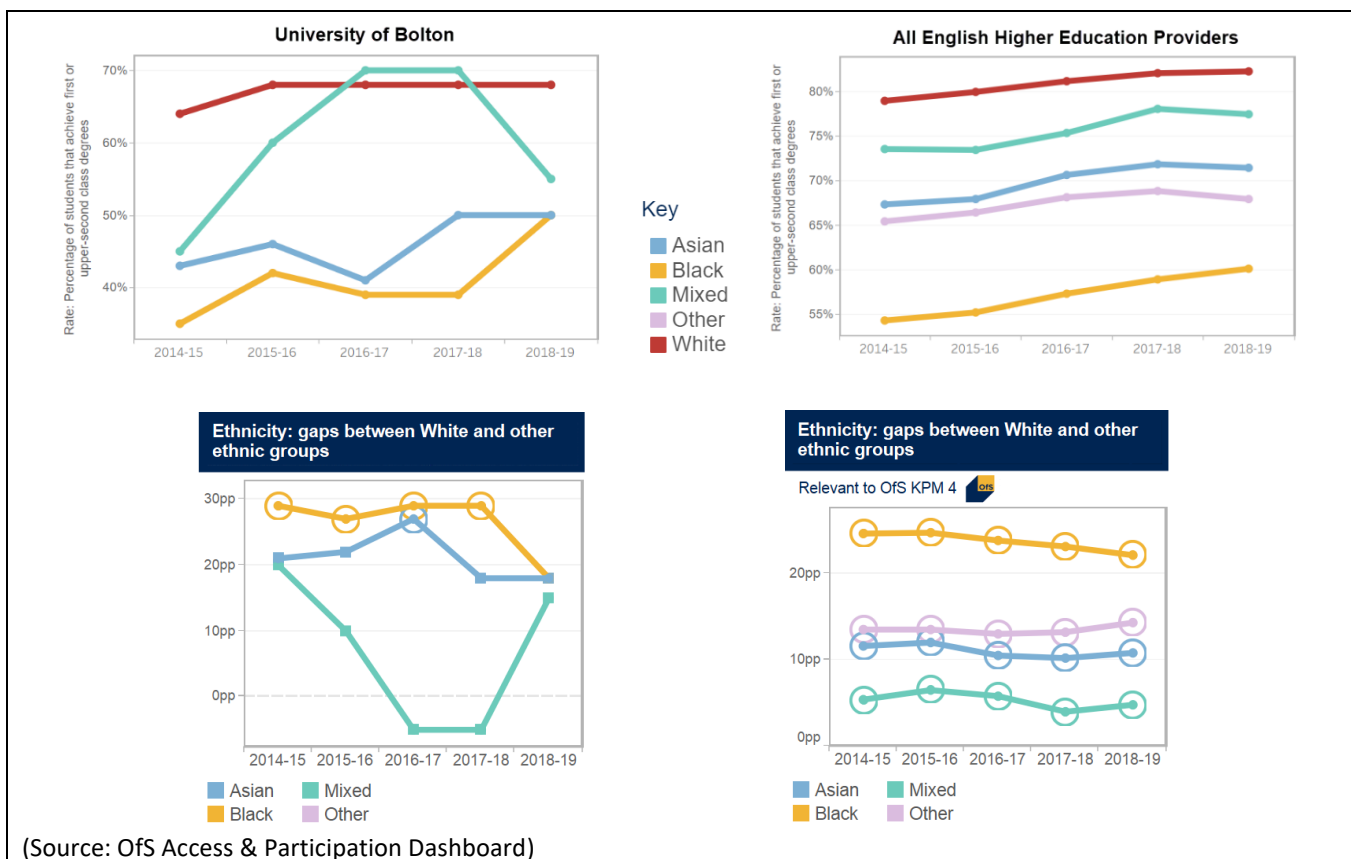
The previous APP noted that the continuation rate for **part-time** BAME students at the University in 2015-16 was 80%, well above the national average of 58.1%. There remains a gap of 5pp between BAME and White part-time students. Whilst internal analyses have yet to be externally verified, early indications show a possible widening of the gap, which the University continues to monitor.

Attainment (2018-19)

UoB lags national figures for attainment across all ethnicities, especially Asian and Mixed students, plus White and Black, although Black and Asian students’ attainment rates improved. The attainment gaps were reduced between White and Asian students (18pp, in line with APP target), White and Black students (improved to 18pp, better than both target and national gap) and White and Mixed students (moving from -5pp to +15pp), although with a population of only 30). Whilst these reductions were encouraging, they were not statistically significant and internal data for 2019-20 suggested they may not be sustained improvements. Hence, they are retained as targets.

Attainment by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	UoB	National	UoB Gap to White	National Gap to White
Asian	50%	71%	+18pp	+10.8pp
Black	50%	60%	+18pp	+22.1pp
Mixed	55%	77%	+13pp	+4.8pp
Other	No Data	68%	No Data	
White	68%	82%		



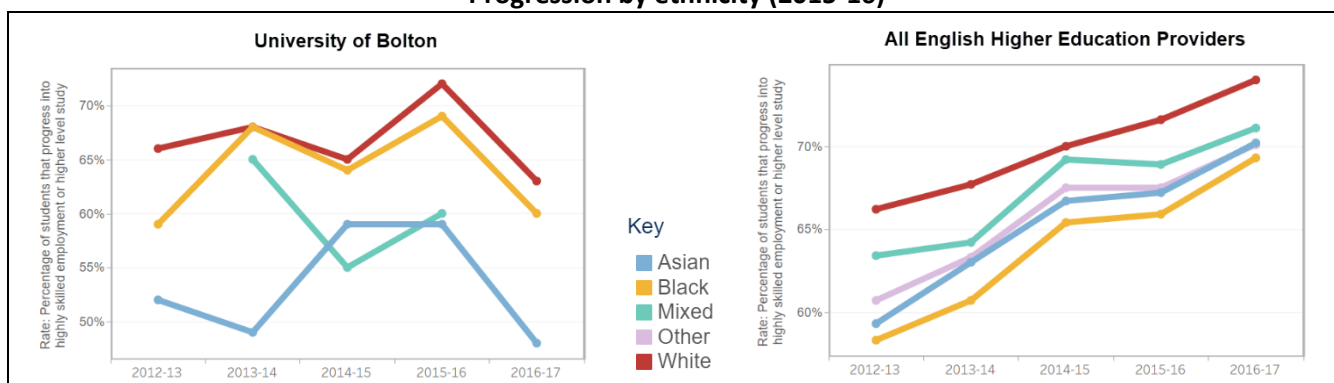
For **part-time** students, the previous APP identified that the attainment rate in 2017-18 was 45%, above the sector average, but with a gap of 25pp between BAME and White part-time students. The data are too small to disaggregate between specific ethnicities. In 2018-19, the population remained small, but the gap narrowed to 16pp. Internal analysis showed this remained broadly similar for 2019-20. Due to the size of the population, it is not appropriate to set a target against this measure. Nevertheless, the University will continue to monitor these outcomes.

Progression to employment or further study – data analysis from the OfS Dataset (2015-16)

Progression rates for all ethnic groups were significantly lower in absolute terms than the national rates, although the gap between White and Black students remained low (between 0-3pp over last 4 years, better than national gap of 5pp). The gap between Asian and White students was 16pp and therefore remains a target in this APP.

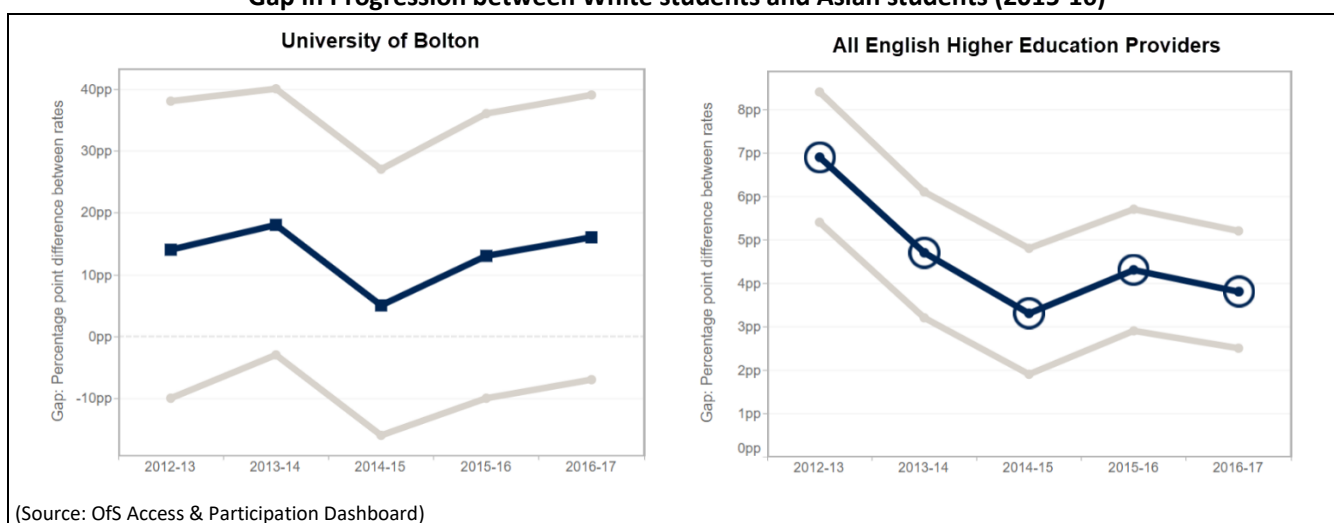
We have reviewed (internal UoB data) rates of Employment (all skill levels) and Further Study and the gaps are broadly similar as in the Progression measure. The gap between Asian and White students was 13pp.

Progression by ethnicity (2015-16)



(Source: OfS Access & Participation Dashboard)

Gap in Progression between White students and Asian students (2015-16)



(Source: OfS Access & Participation Dashboard)

Due to the small numbers involved, it is difficult to draw conclusions for PT progression of BAME students. However, with the last available OfS data for 2016-17 we see a gap between Asian and White students of 28% for PT progression. As above for FT students, this will continue to be an area of focus, though further detailed analysis of new GOS data is required before we determine whether a specific target needs to be set for PT students in the future.

1.3 Mature students

The University has a very significant population of Mature students and this is having an impact, based on preliminary analysis, in many areas and across all sub-categories of student across the University. This is to be investigated in much more detail now the UoB has appointed an Analysis & Evaluation Officer and this work will form part of a wider investigation into various 'intersections' and Structural & Unexplained Gaps.

Access— data analysis from the OfS Dataset

The proportion of **full-time** Mature students at the University grew steadily over recent years, reaching 57.6% in 2018-19 compared to 29.4% nationally. Latest data shows this has further increased to just under 70%.

Whilst the absolute number of **part-time** students fell in 2018-19, the proportion of Mature part-time students grew to 92.0% in 2018-19, slightly higher than the national value of 87.8%.

The University will continue to monitor the proportions of Mature students across both full- and part-time.

Success – data analysis from the OfS Dataset

Non-continuation (2017-18)

In absolute terms, continuation rates of Mature full-time students improved and were slightly better than the national rate, although Young students underperformed. In terms of gaps between Mature and Young, at -2pp, UoB performed better than the national gap of +8pp. Over the period 2013-14 to 2017-18 both rates of continuation have improved

– Mature at 84% to 86% and Young from 81% to 84%. We will continue to monitor this as we expect the rapidly increasing proportion of Mature students at the University will have impacts across all life stages.

Mature Students – Continuation

Age	UoB	National
Young	84%	92%
Mature	86%	84%
Gap Mature to Young	-2pp	+8pp

Attainment (2018-19)

Absolute attainment rates for both Young and Mature students were behind national rates, although the gap between Mature and Young (2pp in the 2018-19 data) was better than the national gap of 10pp. The previous APP committed to consider a further year of data, with any demonstrable widening of the gap for mature student attainment prompting the setting of a target. As that data showed the gap narrowing from 5pp to 2pp, the University will not yet set a target.

Internal analysis of 2019-20 data suggested that these figures remain volatile and thus will be investigated as part of a larger project (Structural & Unexplained Gaps and Intersectional Analysis). The Mature student proportion at the University has grown significantly and this is, from preliminary internal data, believed to be having a “confounding impact” on analysis across all other characteristics.

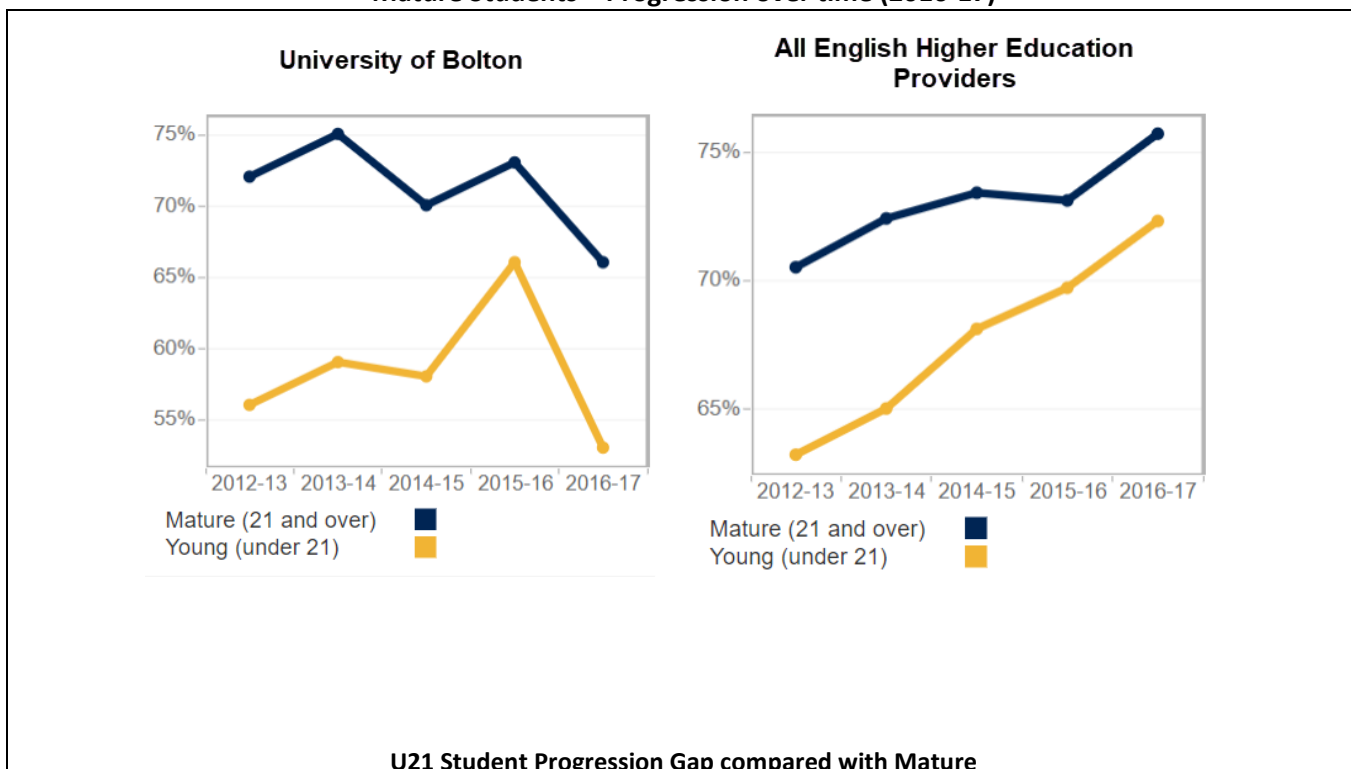
Mature Students – Attainment

Age	UoB	National
Young	61%	80%
Mature	59%	70%
Gap Young to Mature	-2pp	-10pp

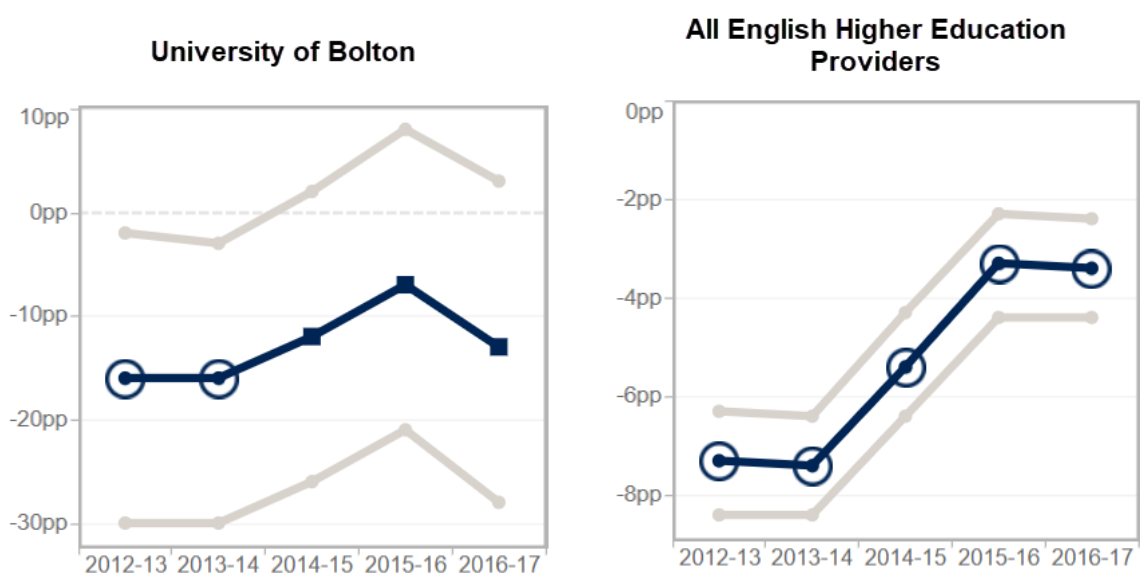
Progression to employment or further study – data analysis from the OfS Dataset (2016-17) and UoB internal data

Employment of all our graduates is a key internal priority for the University, covering both Young and Mature, as full-time absolute rates were lower than national rates for Young and Mature students combined. Mature students performed better than Young, with a gap of -13pp compared to -3pp nationally. This will be investigated in more detail as indicated above.

Mature Students – Progression over time (2016-17)



U21 Student Progression Gap compared with Mature



(Source: OfS Access & Participation Dashboard)

For part-time, both Young and Mature students fared better. The absolute rate for part-time Mature was 83% (75.8% nationally), with a gap of -13pp ahead of Young (-11.5pp nationally). This will be investigated as detailed above.

1.4 Disabled students

We undertook an analysis for each life-cycle of the student journey by disability type. Due to low absolute numbers in each category, data tends to fluctuate and in some cases is not available. However, in general terms, we see most gaps over the past 5 years averaging around zero. Though we will continue to monitor all of them, the one of most concern at this stage is for continuation of disabled students in receipt of DSA or not known DSA (see below).

We make observations here for each stage of the journey for students declaring a disability.

Access – data analysis from the OfS Dataset

The proportion of full-time disabled students at the University was 17.6% in 2018-19 compared to 15.8% nationally.

For 2014-15 to 2017-18 the proportion of part-time students declaring a disability remained around 7%. For 2018-19 this rose sharply to 13.0% compared to 17.1% nationally (having risen steadily from 11.4% over the previous 5 years).

Success - data analysis from the OfS Dataset

Non-continuation (2017-18)

Continuation rates for disabled students improved sharply by 5pp to 89% in 2017-18, which is the same as the national average. This improvement led to an increase in the continuation gap between Disabled and 'Not Known Disabled' (moving from 0 to -5pp).

Attainment (2018-19)

After several preceding years of a negative gap, Disabled students' attainment suffered a drop in 2018-19, leading to the gap between Disabled and 'Not Known Disabled' moving from 0 to +5pp. However, internal analysis of 2019-20 data indicated that the gap had once again become negative, with Disabled students performing better than 'Not Known Disabled'. Therefore, a target will not be introduced for this group.

Progression to employment or further study – data analysis from the OfS Dataset and internal data

At the University, there is a 1pp gap (OfS 2016-17) in progression between those with a disability and those without. Whilst small, this gap will continue to be monitored over the period of this APP.

Looking at rates of Employment (all skill levels) and Further Study (internal data), the gap between those with a declared disability and those without is 6pp. We will undertake a detailed analysis of this position, once the new GOS data is available, before making any further commitments or targets.

Types of Disability and DSA – data analysis from the OfS Dataset and UoB Internal data

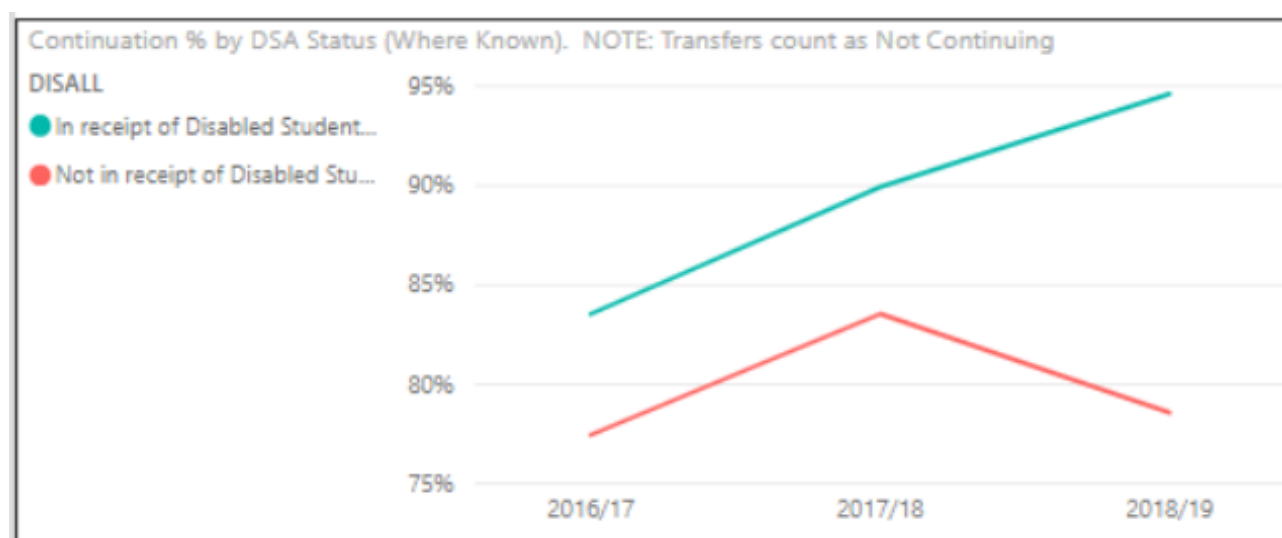
We undertook an analysis to examine gaps at any life-cycle stage by Disability Type (OfS data) and by whether a student was in receipt of DSA or not (Internal UoB data).

DSA data is for those students in the APP population with a declared disability. Any students where the DSA status is "unknown" are excluded.

In all categories relatively small numbers of students give volatile data and so we will continue to monitor all areas of disability separately, and in receipt of DSA or not. In very broad terms, we have no firm evidence to suggest disabled students perform less well than students declaring no disability.

One area of note was the Continuation data (internal UoB) for those students receiving DSA and those not in receipt of DSA where there appears to be an emerging gap. We are making an additional commitment to investigate in more detail and action as required.

The latest gap is 16pp in Continuation between those in receipt of DSA (95%) and those not in receipt (79%). We will make a more detailed analysis of the data before making any further commitment in this area (see also Section 3.1.4.3 p29).



The University will look at internal data closely to establish if a target is required (see also Sec 3.1.4.3).

1.5 Care Experienced Students

In 2020 the University established a Care Leavers Working Group which subsequently changed to a Care Experienced Working Group. This group is currently working through all current initiatives to determine the impact caused by the change in definition from "Care Leavers" to "Care Experienced". Information for the UoB below is using the 'old' definition and this will be changed in due course. We will also be guided by the OfS findings on Care Experienced Students. This is referenced below for completeness. We will update the OfS should our findings indicate changed target(s) within the updated definition of Care Experienced Students.

Access – data analysis from UoB data

"In 2018-19 only 13 per cent of pupils who were looked after continuously for 12 months or more entered higher education compared to 43 per cent of all other pupils" (SOURCE : [Care experienced students and looked after children - Office for Students](#))

The number of care experienced students at the University is very small and it has not been possible to ascertain an accurate comparison. The University's Care Experience Working Group is responsible for reviewing and improving the support available to Care Experienced students from the point of application to graduation. Working with our local councils, we commit to understand the context of care experienced students and aim to determine the UoB proportion and set appropriate goals/targets as soon as possible.

In our last APP, we committed to increase the number of Care Experienced students from 8 to 30 by 2025-26 and the latest data we have indicates the number of Care Experienced students at 16 new entrants in 2020-21.

Success, Continuation and Progression – data analysis from UoB data

“National data (see Source above) indicates for 2018-19 entrants the rate of achieving a First or Upper Second-class degree was 12.1pp lower for care-experienced students compared to those not in care.

The data also suggests that care experience may not negatively impact progression into highly skilled employment or further study at a higher level.

New experimental data also shows that for 2017-18 entrants the continuation rate of care experienced students was 5.6pp lower than for students who had not been in care.”

No analysis is currently possible due to the very low population size. These measures will be revisited if numbers increase.

1.6 Students from Military Families or Ex Service Personnel

While we do not yet have internal data to measure the number of students at the University from military families or ex-service personnel, we are committed to improving participation rates for this under-represented group.

Information taken from McCullough and Hall (2016)- https://www.scipalliance.org/assets/files/UoW-research-paper_Further-and-Higher-Progression-for-Service-Children.pdf states the following:

- Only 4 in 10 Service Children (with the ability to progress) go onto Higher Education
- 43% of general population progress to HE, only 24% of Service Children
- 0.6% of Secondary School Population from Service Families

Looking at the local distribution of service children in Bolton and surrounding regions (Data from <https://www.scipalliance.org/map>) we note that there is opportunity to engage with this group in our local area:

- Bolton has approx. 120 service children across 50 schools
 - 36% of schools have one or more service children
 - Slight majority of primary age service children
- Wigan has approx. 255 service children across 80 schools
 - 59% of schools have one or more service children
 - % service children in Wigan LA is above national average

1.7 Intersections of disadvantage

Access – data analysis from UoB data

Intersections were considered including deprivation quintiles (both IMD and POLAR4) with ethnicity, and deprivation quintiles with gender. The lower deprivation quintiles for UoB in all these combinations were ahead of the national position in absolute terms. The proportion of Mature students was significantly higher than the national average for both male and female students.

Preliminary analysis undertaken also indicated that the very high proportion of Mature students (with generally low entrance qualifications – see below) are major ‘confounding variables’, making accurate conclusions difficult at this time.

Further, more detailed analysis, following OfS Guidance on Structural & Unexplained Gaps, is planned to investigate and address these issues. This work, expected to be in regular review (at least annually), is planned for completion by the end of the academic year (September 2021) with reporting to the OfS at the next Monitoring Return in January 2022. This applies also to Continuation and Attainment below.

Success – data analysis from UoB data

Non-continuation

The University’s focus is the overall continuation rate of male students irrespective of intersections with deprivation and ethnicity. For BAME students, correlation appears to relate more to ethnicity rather than deprivation.

An initial research project with the School of Education and Psychology to model University continuation and attainment data, explaining gaps and comparing with national models was undertaken and concluded that a more detailed project should be established to commence in early 2021. This project (Structural & Unexplained Gaps) will move to Phase 2 now the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer is in post.

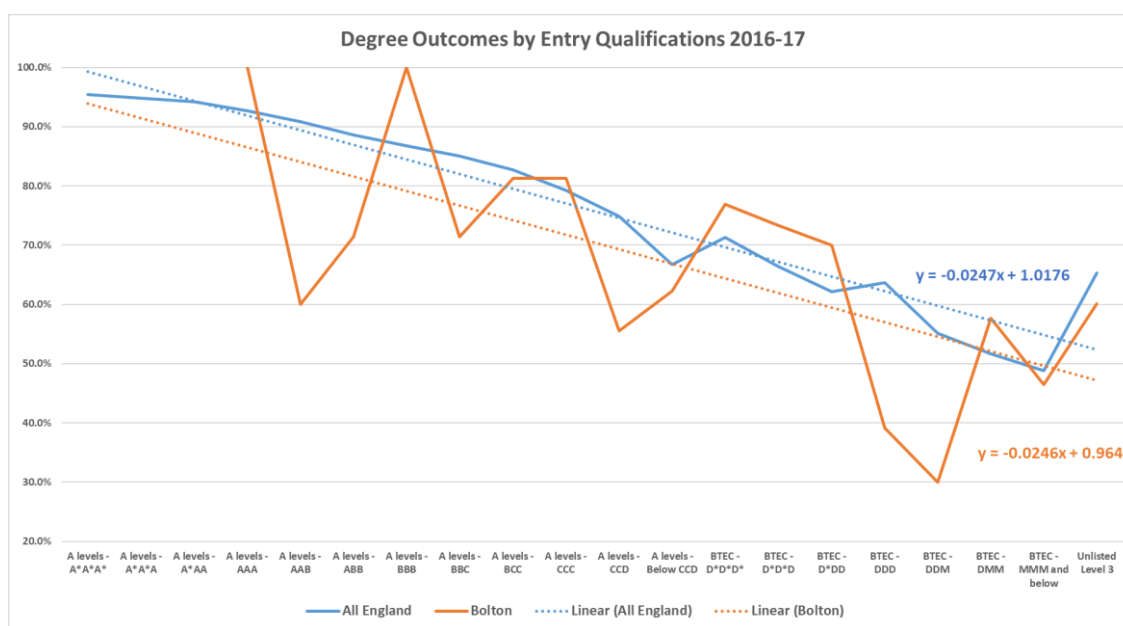
In line with OfS guidance, the University continues to develop models for analysis relevant to the University's characteristic student population, particularly in respect of previously identified unexplained gaps.

Details of current findings relating to attainment are summarised below. University modelling of continuation continues to develop, and the findings are internally discussed to inform early interventions for at risk students.

Attainment

The intersection of BAME with deprivation quintiles showed that UoB fell behind national figures for all quintiles, therefore BAME attainment will be targeted generally. The University's attainment also fell behind the national averages in all intersections of deprivation and sex, with males consistently underperforming against female.

National data (OfS) shows evidence of a strong relationship between a student's Attainment and their entry qualifications. Internal University analysis, taking account of the smaller dataset (producing greater variability), demonstrated a similar trend. The uniform 5.4% difference between University and national averages of good degree outcomes over all entry qualifications is of concern, though corresponds with 84% of students entering with BTEC qualifications or lower.



The project with the School of Education and Psychology determined two major structural factors are affecting UoB:

1. qualifications on entry being significantly different to the aggregated data – UoB data shows only 14% of students with any form of A-level qualification.
2. the significantly larger Mature student population. This compounds the above point, with Mature students having, in general, lower entry level qualifications.

The UoB has a higher proportion of BAME, disabled, and lower-quintile deprivation students; but the outcomes of these groups do not, with the initial modelling, correlate in a statistically significant way with entry qualifications in the UoB data. Further analysis is required and planned now the Monitoring & Evaluation Officer is in-post.

Progression – data analysis from UoB data

Analysis of the intersections between gender and POLAR4 shows that UoB underperforms nationally across all groupings, with P4Q3,4,5 and female being the lowest performing group. Similarly, for intersections of ethnicity and POLAR4, with P4Q3,4,5 and Non-White being lowest performing group. As noted above, employment of graduates generally is an internal priority of the University.

1.8 Other groups who experience barriers in higher education.

Success – data analysis from UoB data

The continuation rate for male students from P4Q1&2 improved by 3 pp from 77% in 2014-15 to 80% in 2017-18 (national 88.7%). The rates between male and female students from P4Q1&2 differed by 8pp in 2017-18. However, this gap is not specific just to P4Q1&2 and is further evidence that we need to look more closely at both male and female continuation intersected with deprivation as this may be related to our recruitment strategies and our larger-than-average proportion of students from the quintiles of higher deprivation.

2. Strategic aims and objectives

The overall Aims of the University are to:

- Maintain rates of participation at the University of Bolton of under-represented groups and improve participation for Care Experienced Students and Students from Military families and Ex Service Personnel.
- Ensure that every student at the University of Bolton has the same opportunities to succeed.
- Reduce or eliminate progression gaps between under-represented groups in Graduate Employment.

Our Objectives are to:

- Remove the gap in Continuation by 2025-26.
- Reduce the gaps in Degree Outcomes by 2025-26, as set out in the APP, and to eliminate the absolute gap (caused by both structural and unexplained factors) by 2030-31.
- Reduce the gaps in Graduate Level employment by 2025-26, as set out in the APP and to eliminate the absolute gap (caused by both structural and unexplained factors) by 2032-33.
- Fully implement the Evaluation Impact Framework and Self-Assessment Toolkits. Investigate the applicability of the Financial Evaluation Toolkit - as appropriate for the UoB data-set - recommended by the OfS and TASO, by the end of the 2020-21 Academic year
- Undertake a full analysis with the Structural & Unexplained Gaps project, in line with the guidance and modelling by the OfS, by the end of the 2020-21 academic year.

The analysis, as summarised above, confirms there are no additional emerging areas which the University currently feels should be classified as a target. We have, however, revised some of the existing targets following this analysis and these are as follows:

Target	Target Group	Baseline	Milestone (2025-26)	Measures plus comments
To remove the gap in continuation	FT UG Black students and White students (PTS_1)	4%	0% (0% from 2021-22)	Section 3.1.4.2
	FT UG Asian students and White students (PTS_2)	3%	0% (0% from 2021-22)	Section 3.1.4.2
To reduce the gap in good degree outcomes (1st and 2:1)	FT UG Young students from P4Q1 and P4Q5 (PTS_3)	18%	4%	Section 3.1.4.2
	FT UG students from IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 (PTS_4)	17%	4%	Section 3.1.4.2
	FT UG Black students and White students (PTS_5)	18%	4%	Section 3.1.4.2
	FT UG Asian students and White students (PTS_6)	18%	2%	Section 3.1.4.2
To reduce the gap in graduate level employment	PT UG IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 students	17.5%	5%	To be reviewed following release of additional GOS data. Section 3.1.4.4
	FT UG Asian and White students	16%	4%	

In addition, we make the following commitments:

Target	Target Group	Measures plus comments
To improve access to HE	Care Experienced Students	See section 3.1.4.1 Commitment: to increase from 16 in 2020-21 to 31 per year by 2023-24 and then maintain at a similar level.
	Children from Military Families & Ex Service Personnel	See section 3.1.2 Commitment: to take steps to ensure we have accurate data on this group during 2021-22 and then to increase participation by 30% over the 5-year period.
	Aspiration amongst all groups	See section 3.1.2 Commitment: to working collaboratively through UniConnect: continuation of GM Higher partnerships. We will also continue our initiatives and activities to maintain our participation performance across all the main under-represented groups. Targets are being agreed and are due by the end of the 2020-21 academic year. Subsequently, targets will be monitored and reported on by the Greater Manchester Higher partnership through its Governing Board on an annual basis.
To remove the gap in continuation	Support students with declared disabilities including Mental Health	See Section 3.1.4.3 and Section 1.4 regarding additional commitment for disabled students in receipt of DSA or not. Commitment: to continually improve services and support for students declaring a disability during the span of this APP. To better understand the reasons for non-continuation of disabled students not in receipt of DSA during 2021-22.
	Support students in Hardship	See Section 4.1. Commitment: To continue to support students in hardship through the Student Support Fund during the span of this APP and to measure its effectiveness and impact.
	FT UG Mixed ethnicity students and White	This has been changed from a previous target to a commitment. Commitment: to maintain continuation levels during the span of this APP following previous improvement, albeit with a relatively small population. This will be reviewed annually.
	PT UG BAME and White students	Population size small but continue to monitor outcomes via annual review; if demonstrates any meaningful issue, request a variation to this plan to set a target.
To reduce the gap in good degree outcomes (1st and 2:1)	PT UG BAME and White students	Population size small but continue to monitor outcomes via annual review; if demonstrates any meaningful issue, request a variation to this plan to set a target.
To reduce the gap in graduate level employment	FT UG students from P4Q1 and P4Q5	To be reviewed following release of additional GOS data and if performance shows a material deteriorating trend, to request a variation to this plan to set a target.
	FT UG students from IMDQ1 and IMDQ5	
	FT UG Disabled and No Known Disability	
Evaluation	All	Relevant findings from evaluation of interventions (undertaken at least annually) will be shared with TASO on an ongoing basis and fed forward into subsequent years planning. Contact will be made with TASO on how this is to

		<p>be routinely achieved by the end of the 2021 Academic Year. Some of the planned evaluations include careers and employability initiatives (Aug 2022); and transition activities, welcome and induction, diagnostics, Student Success Team and Early Intervention System (phased, starting September 2022).</p> <p>We are currently exploring the extent to which we may be able to use the OfS financial toolkit to evaluate this with a view to using the various tools where possible (end 2021, reported in the 2020-21 monitoring return).</p>
Monitoring	Continuation and attainment	<p>Development of university wide continuation and attainment plans, incorporating Personal Academic Tutoring within the existing monitoring structures, as a parallel to the existing quality annual monitoring framework. Planned activity to start with a pilot in Semester 2 of academic year 2021-22</p>
Monitoring	IMD	<p>We use the IMD (2015) set of measures in this APP, though we noted the addition of IMD (2019) to the APP Dashboard in March 2021. We will move to the IMD(2019) measures through 2021, reporting to the OfS at the next Monitoring cycle due in January 2022 and at that point if any targets need to be revised, we will seek a variation of the plan from the OfS</p>

As discussed above in the 'Assessment of Performance' section, the following items have been considered but no target or commitment set at the current time, for the reasons given, although performance will continue to be monitored:

Target	Target Group	Rationale
To remove the gap in continuation	FT UG students from P4Q1 and P4Q5	The UoB continuation rates lagged national rates across all quintiles and thus improvement across all quintiles is an internal priority for the University. Whilst the gaps between full-time P4Q1&5 and IMDQ1&5 increased slightly and are comparable with national gaps, they have shown improvement in absolute terms.
	FT UG students from IMDQ1 and IMDQ5	
	FT UG Other ethnicity students and White	The population size is relatively small; internal analysis of 2019-20 data indicates this has continued to improve.
To reduce the gap in good degree outcomes (1st and 2:1)	FT UG Mixed ethnicity students and White	The gap has moved from -5 to +15 although with a population of just 30; volatility is not unexpected in such a small population size, although the outcomes will continue to be monitored.
	FT UG Mature and Young students	The previous APP committed to consider a further year of data, with any demonstrable widening of the gap for Mature student attainment to prompt the setting of a target. As that data showed the gap narrowing from 5pp to 2pp, the University will not set a target at this time but will continue to monitor these outcomes.
	FT UG Disabled and No Known Disability	After several preceding years of a negative gap, Disabled students' attainment suffered a drop in 2018-19, leading to the gap between 'Disabled' and 'Not Known Disabled' moving from 0 to +5pp. However, internal analysis of 2019-20 data indicated that the gap had once again become negative, with Disabled students performing better than 'Not Known Disabled'. Therefore, a target will not be introduced for this group.

3. Strategic measures

3.1 Whole provider strategic approach

3.1.1 Overview

Diversity is one of our distinctive features and we are stronger and add greater value as a result. We take seriously our responsibilities to understand the needs of our students and tailor learning opportunities to help them succeed, despite structural, economic, and cultural constraints. We have developed a 'Theory of Change' to enable the University to close or narrow gaps in Access, Success and Progression outcomes of under-represented groups by 2025-26 (see diagram on page 21).

In working to achieve this overarching goal we intend to deliver on three core outcomes:

- Maintain rates of **participation** at the University of Bolton of under-represented groups and improve **participation** for **Care Experienced Students and Students from Military families and Ex Service Personnel**
- Ensure that every student at the University of Bolton has the same opportunities to **succeed**
- Reduce or eliminate **progression** gaps between under-represented groups in **Graduate Employment**.

We will employ an evidence-informed approach to designing our strategic measures, which will include but not be limited to:

- Data from OfS, internal and other sources
- Statistical analysis projects e.g. Structural & Unexplained Gaps; Intersection Analysis
- Self-assessment evaluations (OfS Self-Assessment Toolkit)
- Evaluation of interventions and new initiatives (OfS Financial Evaluation Toolkit)
- OfS best practice
- TASO best practice (e.g. full implementation of the Evaluation Impact Framework)
- Specific external research

Taking a whole-provider approach, our strategic measures are detailed within this document referencing appropriate evidence where possible throughout the plan. Our overarching strategy is to focus on developing new 'Platinum' programmes attracting well-qualified applicants, regardless of background, and deliver higher-than-average outcomes, including student retention and professional employment. The Platinum Strategy, now underway for five years, seeks to fundamentally transform the institution into a "Teaching Intensive, Research Informed (TIRI) University". As part of this bold agenda, the University has been reshaping its core academic provision with the creation of a strong "course-based student eco-system", where each programme recruits and sustains a large enough critical mass of learners of high quality to provide cohort cohesion and team spirit amongst students. These student groups create strong learning communities and enhance the overall student experience, supported by sufficiently varied high quality academic staff teams in the respective disciplines, whose research directly informs the teaching and student learning experience.

A suite of actions, as enablers to our plans, complement and underpin the development of our Platinum programmes to achieve tangible further improvements in student continuation and attainment outcomes:

- Commitment to invest and resource these strategic measures and evaluation of such.
- Communications plan to raise awareness of equality gaps amongst the academic and professional support community in pursuance of our goal.
- Expanding our data analysis capabilities through the appointment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer with data analysis expertise and development and evolution of an 'Evaluation Impact Framework'
- Commitment to adopting and sharing best practice.
- Enhancing our staff development and training programme to include skills and knowledge of relevant data, evidence, and interventions.

To monitor performance, adapting and adjusting our strategic measures in a timely manner we have put in place monitoring and evaluation protocols involving the wider University community. As detailed elsewhere in this plan these include the following:

- Further establishment and evolution of our 'Evaluation Impact Framework'
- Appointment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
- APP Steering Group
- Student consultation

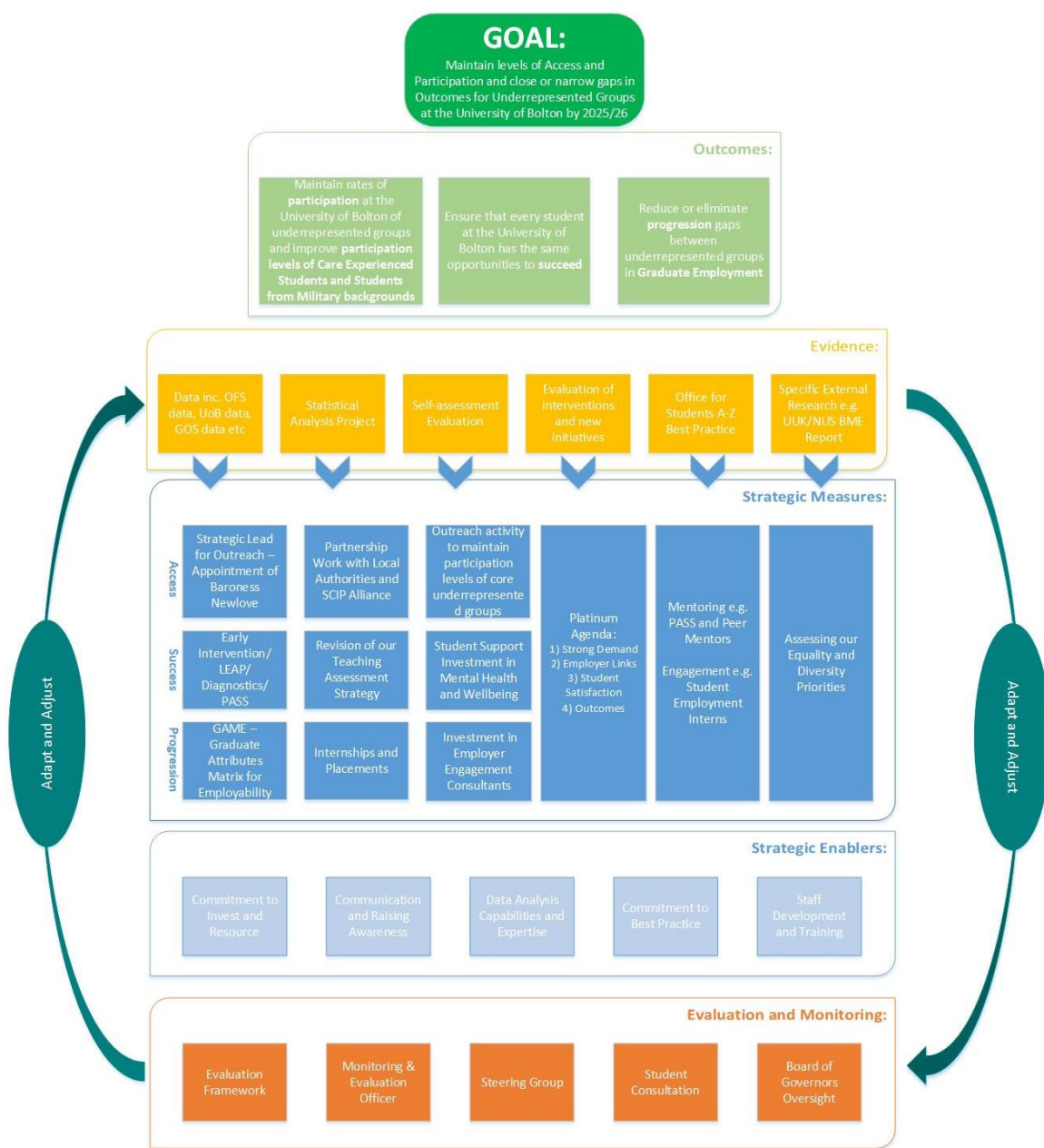
- Board of Governors oversight

The University has committed to invest in the necessary resources to deliver its targets, including new staffing appointments, for example the substantial strengthening of our “Employment Team”, and the appointment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer.

Baroness Newlove is now well established at the University as Pro Vice Chancellor (Access and Widening Participation). She is a working Peer, previously working at ministerial level. She will undertake regional outreach and play a leading role in University Open Days, aiming to inspire students from diverse backgrounds to achieve their aspirations.

Our radical new approach to our institutional philosophy (TIRI) and our course portfolio strategy (Platinum Courses) since 2015-16 is already demonstrating tangible dividends in student continuation and completion, confirming the appropriateness of our bold approach.

The University of Bolton Access and Participation Theory of Change Model



3.1.2 Collaborative work not specifically included in other measures.

Students from Military Families and Ex-Service Personnel.

We are a signatory to the Armed Forces Covenant which is a public pledge demonstrating our support for the Armed Forces community to ensure they do not face disadvantage in taking HE opportunities. We offer financial support to help attract ex-service personnel who have completed a minimum of three years in the armed services. This bursary is worth £500 per year for the normal duration of the course to support participation (see evidence detailed in Section 1.6).

During the first Semester of 2020-21 the Greater Manchester Hub of the SCiP (Service Children's Progression) Alliance will be established, with the University of Bolton as host. This hub will work collaboratively with other HEIs across the region to engage Young people from military families and with the Lancashire and North West SCiP Alliance hubs.

UniConnect – Greater Manchester Higher.

At the time of writing, UniConnect funding has been confirmed to continue for another year from August 2021, albeit at reduced levels. We remain committed to working collaboratively with other HEIs, FE colleges, schools, third sector organisations and employers in the region in whatever structure is agreed in the coming months to raise awareness of, and encourage progression to, the full range of HE opportunities.

The pandemic has caused a delay in agreeing a collaborative target for Greater Manchester around the proportion of Care Leavers progressing to HE, and a target relating to participation of Greater Manchester learners in HE. However, work to set and agree both these targets is in progress and these will be approved by the GM Higher Governing Board by the end of the 2020-21 academic year. Subsequently, targets will be monitored and reported on by the Greater Manchester Higher partnership through its Governing Board on an annual basis.

3.1.3 Alignment with other strategies

This Plan strongly aligns with the Improvement Plan previously submitted to the OfS, which focuses on interventions to student continuation, completion, employment, and further study. The University continues to build upon the successful approaches being implemented through its TIRI (Teaching Intensive Research Informed) approach.

During the past year, our Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy has been revised within a broader **Student Success Strategy**. Implicit within this strategy are diverse, inclusive, and adaptable approaches which engage our students and help them achieve successful academic outcomes.

In March 2021, the University Executive Board approved the new Student Mental Health and Well-being Strategy 2021-2026. The Student Mental Health and Well-being Strategy is aligned with the activities as identified throughout this Access and Participation Plan. The strategy was written in accordance with guidance from Universities UK (UUK), Student Minds, The Office for Students (OfS) and following wider consultation undertaken within the University including the Students' Union and a small student focus group held in 2019.

The Progression / Employability Strategy is also embraced within the broader **Student Success Strategy**, with the aim of achieving successful Graduate Outcomes via an integrated approach. The Strategy identifies that opportunities are tailored and *personalised* through subject and programmes to meet the academic, pastoral, and professional rigours that are required for personal development, successful employment or further higher study and so encapsulate lifelong and life-wide approaches to learning. These are complemented by a personalised employability experience that provides the right support to the right students at the right time to boost their performance, opportunities, and facilitate the development of their professional character. This links with the APP through the delivery of a three-year 'Employment Action Plan' from 2020-21 that consolidates elements of the University's Employability, Enterprise, and Apprenticeship Strategy.

Over the past two years, a revised planning framework has been implemented linking quality monitoring, planning, and budgeting within an integrated process. This year, gap analysis has been included within the data that informs quality monitoring, so that each subject area reflects on the performance of the different student groups covered within this APP to inform their subsequent plans. Hence, monitoring of the gaps between student groups is now becoming embedded within mainstream processes.

The University has considered the impact that the strategic measures proposed in this APP have on students with protected characteristics. The initiatives and interventions detailed in this plan and our holistic approach to improving outcomes across the board mean that all our students benefit, not just those with protected characteristics. Design of our strategic measures and the performance of the APP is included as a standing agenda item at the Equality and Diversity Committee and feeds into the institution's Equality and Diversity priorities and strategies where appropriate. This committee will also monitor the University's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality

Duty 2012 in relation to the APP and its measures. The University has committed to enhancing staff awareness and understanding of the APP's targets more widely across the University as part of its Equality and Diversity training and as part of wider communications. The APP is also a standing item on the monthly Core Operations Meeting (COM) of the academic function, consisting of Deans, all Heads of School/Centre and Academic Operations Leads. This is a new and key initiative to both disseminate and monitor actions from the APP. It is also planned to include APP on the Agenda for School Boards which include staff and student representation.

Finally, to give an overall perspective, the University of Bolton **Group** continues to grow with strategic alliances relevant to this APP, namely:

- **Bolton College** (Further Education College) through which progression routes are provided into higher education for both Young and Mature students (articulating pre-degree provision and enhancing preparedness to study higher education). This directly supports the delivery of the regional skills strategy whilst enabling the University to access a wide range of employment sectors and jobs / employers in the region.
- **Alliance Learning** is a training provider based in Bolton delivering apprenticeships, training courses and foundation degrees, primarily to businesses throughout the North West. It helps encourage local people from all under-represented groups into further and higher education, with further opportunities to develop progression routes to higher education / apprenticeship programmes at the University.
- **The Lancashire Outdoor Activities Initiative / Anderton Centre** offers a range of outdoor team building / confidence-building events, including Duke of Edinburgh awards, providing extra-curricular activities and development of life skills for the University's students.
- **Quest** is a Church of England Schools Trust with which the University has a formal partnership. Its University Collegiate School for 11–18-year-olds is co-located with the University campus.

3.1.4 Strategic measures

ACCESS

We intend to continue our outreach and widening participation activity with the goal of maintaining participation levels of students from the core under-represented groups. Measures include, but are not limited to:

- working with Boys Brigade in England and Wales through a unique new partnership to develop a local and national HE transitional programme for boys and girls from low participation and deprived backgrounds. This project began towards the end of 2019-20 with anticipated pilots with local Boys Brigade companies during 2020-21, starting fully in 2021-22 and continuing during the span of this APP to 2025-26. This project will be evaluated as part of the Evaluation and Impact Framework, in 2022-23 initially, and then again in 2025-26, to determine its success and impact and reviewed accordingly to determine whether it will continue beyond 2025-26.
- our Maths Club initiative working with state schools to raise attainment at GCSE level for those from low participation and deprived backgrounds.
- a flagship 'Mission HE' project aimed at raising confidence and increasing awareness of higher education pathways amongst white working-class males.
- 'Chess in Schools' project encouraging uptake of chess amongst students from low participation and deprived backgrounds.
- enhancing relationships with Bolton Wanderers Football Club and Community Trust (with the launch of a collaborative football squad and teams for the academic year 2021-22), Bolton College and Bolton Collegiate School, Princes Trust, Bolton Lads and Girls Club, Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, and the Scouts.
- We host the Children's University graduation ceremony each year on campus.
- Strategic partnerships with schools and colleges, especially Bolton College and University Collegiate School and our 'Access all Areas' taster days encouraging students from all groups to visit the campus and experience HE.
- Community outreach activity targeting BAME communities.

Apart from the Boys Brigade, all other initiatives will be migrated to the EIF through 2021-22 as they individually re-start following the Pandemic. Evaluation and review cycles will be set at least annually thereafter.

3.1.4.1 Measures to improve the participation rate of 'Care Experienced Students'

Although we have good relationships with the councils in Rochdale and Oldham in relation to looked after children, we are working to develop a shared understanding and closer collaboration in the Bolton and Bury area through Bolton College and our close partnership with Bolton Lads and Girls Club. To achieve our objective, we will commit to

improving our data and understanding of care leavers by the end of 2020-21 in the local area by working with Bolton and Bury Councils and Bolton College.

To bring us in line with other higher education providers, we are revising the definition of 'Care Experienced' learners to include all those with at least 13 weeks of care experience.

In 2020, the University established a Care Leavers Working Group which subsequently changed to a Care Experienced Working Group. This Group consists of staff from across Professional Support Services and the Students Union. This Group submitted proposals to change the financial support on offer to Care Leavers with effect from September 2021. The University Care Leavers Bursary from September 2021 will change to incorporate Care Experienced students. The Care Leavers Bursary required a student to have spent 12 months or more in the 5 years prior to joining the University to qualify for an award. The new Care Experienced Bursary will make an enhanced award to any student who can demonstrate they spent 13 weeks or more in care during their secondary education. This newly approved bursary will award a £1000 in each year of study plus an additional £500 on successful completion of study to assist in the transition to employment or postgraduate study. The new Care Experienced Bursary was informed by the national data as identified in Section 1.5 of this plan and is to support participation and continuation in higher education. We will investigate the feasibility of using the OfS Financial Evaluation Toolkit and assess if it is appropriate to use.

In addition, the Care Experienced Working Group members are conducting a full review of the pastoral and academic support extended to Care Experienced students from the point of application to graduation and with regards to employment beyond graduation. The group will look to have established this package of support for any Care Experienced student entering from September 2021 and thereafter however they will also ensure any new pastoral support measures implemented are extended to those Care Experienced students who are already studying at the University.

We signed up to the Care Leavers Covenant statement of intent in May 2020. This will enhance current initiatives and interventions for care leavers with the aim of increasing the number of care leavers at the University by 2025-26.

We are already an active partner in the 'Looked After Children Forum' which is a collaborative project with the other GM Universities to support progression into higher education.

We currently run a project for year 9 and 10 students in Rochdale and Oldham called 'Success 4 Life'. This is a 9-week aspiration and confidence-raising programme to support the acquisition of transferable skills amongst care experienced children. This is part of a wider Greater Manchester Higher project (non-NCOP funded). From 2020-21 we will bring the 'Success 4 Life' project to the local area (Bolton, Bury) and will deliver training on higher education progression to foster carers and social workers. Additionally, we will provide funding for care experienced applicants to attend open and visit days at the University.

In early 2020-21, we agreed to start working with the 'National Network for the Education of Care Leavers', a quality mark for the inclusion and success of care experienced students as part of the Greater Manchester Pioneer Project.

We will continue our involvement in the Greater Manchester Care Leaver Awards. From 2020-21, this award will be expanded and offered to part-time students on a pro-rata basis if they are studying for a full undergraduate award. This bursary will be available to full and part-time, home-funded, students who have been in care for a minimum of 13 weeks during secondary education with higher education entry up to the age of 25.

SUCCESS

3.1.4.2 Measures to Address Continuation and Attainment of BAME, P4Q1 and IMDQ1 Students

Early Intervention System

Our Early Interventions (EI) system is based on sector-wide research and applied to the Bolton context, specifically the two national "What Works" projects (Thomas, 2012 and 2017) and on the work of Kift & Nelson, (2005, 2015). Key transition points were identified in the student journey and the University has implemented a series of connected interventions to improve the overall student experience. This includes a 'diagnostics' phase and a greater emphasis on personal academic tutoring and student peer learning. These are a means of improving student belonging and academic self-efficacy and allow us to target focussed support as required, specific to students' needs, such as those identified in our APP target groups. Individuals identified with needs are allocated an Enhanced Personal Academic Tutor (EPAT) under the scheme with close personal support.

Preliminary evaluation of the success of the approach can be evidenced from several sources. The first students to benefit from this model graduated from the University in 2019. This coincided with the University's best ever performance in the national student survey, 86.53% for overall student satisfaction, and continued the University's

successful drive to improve continuation. The EI model was also critical in gaining a compliance plus rating in the recent Customer Service Excellence (CSE) assessment (September 2020). The Centre for Assessment (CFA) which carried out the review particularly noted as good practice 'the use of an 'Early Alerts and Interventions' dashboard to identify students at risk of attrition, poor academic performance and social isolation' and 'a sophisticated system which automatically produces an action plan for each new student upon completion of a diagnostic questionnaire'.

The EI system, as a series of targeted interventions, going forward will be incorporated into the University of Bolton Evaluation and Impact Framework. The initial incorporation of individual elements of the EI systems to begin by September 2021 by creating project-level logic models, to support delivery and evaluation at the 'project' level including defined and agreed deliverables supported by a standardised data analysis approach for measuring outcomes. There may be elements of the EI system that require annual monitoring and evaluation starting September 2022, and these will be reported in line with the student success evaluation commitment. We anticipate the first formal round of evaluation to have occurred by July 2024 with reflections incorporated into the 2025 planning cycles.

Welcome and Induction Programme

The University has implemented a sixteen-week programme of pre-transitional welcome and induction activities intended to help students transition and settle in effectively. As part of this, a tutorial curriculum is provided to enable programme teams to introduce transitional concepts to students on a weekly basis. The University now prepares a 'welcome campaign' for each intake, providing a central source of information about starting University and detailed induction schedules for each student. During the pandemic we have continued to deliver these activities though video conferencing to optimise engagement by students who, characteristically, have limited time and financial resources. On-line transition summer school activities were also provided for students.

Although, this will be incorporated into the evaluation framework for September 2021, with the nature of multiple induction points throughout the year, we expect to undertake rapid cycles of evaluation at appropriate points throughout the year to feed change into subsequent in-year induction cycles. Data from evaluation of the welcome and induction process which in turn will feed into the wider cycle of evaluation, specifically the EI model as the induction programme is a key aspect of Early Interventions. We expect this to be completed by July 2024.

Diagnostics

Our diagnostics approach, outlined above, uses an automated diagnostic system where new and existing students complete a reflective questionnaire. Findings are displayed in a dashboard for tutors, highlighting both indicators of risk associated with retention and specific characteristics of students including ethnicity, disability, and age, known contributors to gaps in attainment and progression. Participants each receive an 'action plan' recommending specific activities in an elite learning development programme (Learning Excellence Achievement Pathway - 'LEAP online'). We track completion of this programme by issuing digital badges. As of September 2020, we have 72 badges available across seven LEAP course areas. In the last academic year, (1st September 2019 - 31st August 2020) 27,268 badges were awarded compared to 10,020 for the previous academic year, and 4,370 the year before that.

In addition, we will increase the capacity and targeting of our diagnostics in line with transitional activities and the Welcome and Induction processes (below) to focus on targeted groups based on our assessment of performance from previous years, or in the case of new students, the use of contextual data from the student's application process and the LEAP diagnostics data. This will be undertaken by migrating aspects of the diagnostics to an appropriate point pre-university. Initially targeting FT UG students from P4Q1 and FT UG Asian students, we can utilise this data to direct students to appropriate and meaningful interventions such as BAME ambassadors, one-to-one LEAP Study Skills Tutors, Enhanced Personal Academic Tutors (EPAT) or ADaPT (Academic Development and Progression Team) interventions significantly earlier in the student's journey and at key transition points. We anticipate that this intervention be applied across all entry and transition points and will not only support access to higher education but contribute significantly to reducing the gap in good degree outcomes for P4Q1 as well as Asian and students.

This project will require a phased implementation starting with students transitioning between levels by September 2022-23 followed by all new students by September 2023-24. Incorporation into the EIF will be undertaken by July 2022 with annual monitoring to ensure that the process supports transition as expected with the main evaluation and feedback processes being completed by end of academic year 2024-25.

Further to the outlined interventions, over the next 12 months we will undertake a full appraisal of the diagnostics system focusing on the implementation of the processes across several areas including underpinning technologies, analysis of risk status to align with the employability risk dashboards (Section 3.1.4.4), access and engagement with Personalised Academic Tutoring and Action Plans, and reporting processes.

Evaluation has been built into the project, however, as part of the EI system the diagnostics will be incorporated into the Evaluation and Impact Framework (EIF). The assessment of existing data as part of the reporting and output from the diagnostics are ongoing and we are currently exploring ways by which we can determine baseline numbers at the programme, faculty and university level that incorporate and assess the various risk factors and levels of engagement across the range of supporting intervention. It is anticipated that incorporation on to the EIF will commence by Semester 2, 2021-22, and the first round of evaluation and reflection will take place by July 2024 with enhancements placed into the academic year 2024-25.

Development of a Student Success Team

The University will look to establish a new Student Success Team from staff across Student Experience working closely with colleagues from Recruitment and Admissions, Student Services and Enhanced Personal Tutors. The purpose of this team will initially be to support those students from targeted groups; IMD1, P4Q1 and BAME.

The University will create and develop the role of Student Success Coordinators providing a named point of contact for any students from the targeted groups identified above. The Student Success Coordinators will introduce themselves to the appropriate students post enrolment, and before completion of the diagnostics. Each Student Success Coordinator will have a caseload of students they are supporting. These staff will support the student throughout the duration of their studies through to graduation, working closely with the student's enhanced personal tutor or personal tutor.

Evaluation is to be embedded in approaches that support service delivery and student engagement with incorporation to the EIF starting September 2022. This service will utilise evidence and evaluation findings to support academic schools in identifying and delivering programme level, as well as feeding into, university level improvements. As part of the evaluation process members of the student success team will have access to Early Intervention data and data relevant to academic progression that will allow them to tailor the support they are providing. The Student Success Coordinator will monitor the data of their assigned students to identify any concerns or risks, and working closely with the Student Liaison Officers, will look to make interventions to enhance and improve attainment and non-continuation. Evaluation will be undertaken annually commencing September 2022 in line with Student Success commitment, with a full cycle of evaluation and reflection completed for September 2025.

Development of BAME Ambassadors

The Student Success Team will work collaboratively with the Students' Union on the development of the BAME Ambassador role. The Student Experience Team will look to develop these new roles with the Students' Union.

The BAME Ambassador role will:

- attend University Open Days to raise awareness of the role.
- increase BAME students' sense of belonging.
- improve student experience through a series of student-led initiatives, campaigns, engagement and to feedback students' views to influence positive changes.
- improve representation and progression of BAME students.
- working with course representatives and the Student Experience team, propose new targeted initiatives for BAME students.

The BAME Ambassador will be provided with training from both the Students' Union and University including training on Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity, Dignity at Study (Bullying and Harassment) and will engage in a comprehensive induction process so they have an awareness of the student support services, university policy and procedures and Students' Union initiatives and events.

Subject to the success of this new role, it is proposed that the Student Success Team will support the Students' Union in the development of future Ambassadorial roles for instance Disability Ambassador, LGBTQ+ Ambassador and a Mature Students Ambassador.

As this is a new intervention, incorporation into the EIF will be undertaken as part of the service initiation and that process is ongoing and will be complete by July 2022. The evaluation process will be widened to incorporate success and progression interventions as part of the BAME Ambassador role and as such we will explore where students from across the University can be actively involved in the evaluation beyond the Students Union's current engagement. The initial cycle of evaluation and reflection is expected to be completed by July 2023, with output incorporated into the planning cycles for September 2024-25.

Personal Academic Tutoring

The study skills tutor scheme matches students with appropriate tutor support for academic writing and numeracy. The scheme is a collaboration between the student experience team and the School of Education and Psychology. Tutors can dynamically create live reports to show their students' progress within the Learning Excellence and Achievement Pathway - 'LEAP' programme. Since its introduction initially at HE4, the system has now been expanded to include HE5 and HE7. This diagnostics approach enables us not only to identify these students but also examine the intersectionality of their characteristics. Consequently, we have detailed information about which students are more likely to face significant barriers to learning and participation. This is cross-referenced with sector-wide best practice to assure consistency of approach.

We not only identify students from BAME backgrounds and those from deprived areas (using IMD and POLAR4) but we make available associated factors such as being Mature, which our analysis in Section 1.3 indicates has a substantial impact upon attainment and given the analysis on entry qualifications in that section, we plan to extend this dataset to give some granularity on each student's qualifications. In addition, we can assess their preparedness for learning by reviewing their profile and responses to the LEAP diagnostics questionnaire (above). This allows us, via personal academic tutoring, to provide tailored support to improve their prospect of continuation and attainment through the development of key "actionable insights" which are based on evidence from interventions that have high impact. Hence, this process allows us to provide tailored support to those from BAME and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Personal academic tutoring (PAT) and enhanced personal academic tutoring (EPAT) incorporates new training units, a suite of novel resources and a new tutorial curriculum. The training units and resources were accompanied by six additional seminars for enhanced personal academic tutors and over 150 tutors have participated in the training to date. Emphasis is placed on supporting tutors to understand how to work with students who are at risk; this includes up to date information on attainment, progression, and retention gaps for all students and in particular our target under-represented groups, how to promote student success, and how to work with professional support services colleagues to troubleshoot known problems with student retention and progression.

To achieve the continuation and attainment targets that we have set, several enhancements have been made to the EI model. These enhancements are being driven by the new 'Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy' (part of the overarching Student Success Strategy outlined in Section 3.1.3) which sets out our vision to continue to champion a diverse and inclusive, whole-of-institution learning culture. We are building on existing approaches (including supporting well-being and mental health) and providing high quality training, support, and resources for all academic tutors to enable them to better understand our continuation and attainment gaps (both institutionally and nationally) and devote greater attention to supporting under-represented groups. This will be achieved through a commitment to personal academic tutoring being effectively resourced, integrated and having parity with other teaching and learning activities, including annual monitoring and evaluation as part of the university wide retention and attainment planning as a parallel to standard academic quality processes. The annual monitoring processes will commence with a pilot study Semester 2, 2021-22.

Additional work will also be undertaken through a comprehensive review of our 'at-risk' criteria, in line with aforementioned diagnostics processes and enhancements to student progression (Section 3.1.4.4.) and analysis of the reporting infrastructure of Learning Excellence and Achievement Pathway (LEAP) diagnostic data used to inform academic tutors about academic signposting targeting FT UG P4Q1 students and FT UG Asian students. This will allow us to provide focussed and targeted support both academically and pastorally through BAME ambassadors, LEAP Study Skills Tutors, Enhanced Personal Academic Tutors, Student Liaison Officers, and the interventions from the ADaPT (Academic Development and Progression Team) processes. In line with other Student Experience focused processes, we anticipate that this will improve not only student continuation, but through this targeted approach and enhanced academic interventions, increase student attainment within the targeted groups as a result. This will include continued research, review, and adoption, where appropriate, of specific measures identified in the OfS Effective Practice Toolkit for our target groups beyond the lifetime of this APP.

Due to the fundamental nature of Personal Academic Tutoring, and its implementation across the University a collaborative approach to evaluation and impact will take place. We will consider the whole student lifecycle and engagement within the Personal Academic Tutoring processes, ensuring the impact of activities on students with specific characteristics can be tracked at each stage of their journey. A proposed Annual Academic Tutoring and Retention Monitoring Process will also provide data for the EIF, which academic schools and Student Union representatives report back through formal committee structures. The process will start in Semester 2, 2021-22 and we will evaluate annually, but with a focus on a full student lifecycle to understand effectiveness across the whole student journey reporting back with recommendations and findings July 2025.

Other initiatives and interventions

Student Experience Curriculum

Students Services and Student Experience in partnership with our Students' Union and academic faculties will undertake an institutional-wide review, with a deep focus on inclusion, well-being, and belonging and identity across all curriculum areas to develop a "Student Experience Curriculum". We will evaluate the co-production of strategic activities by inviting representatives from colleges from across the region, focusing on those in deprived areas or with a greater percentage of BAME students, in order for us to learn and co-develop approaches that support students, particularly FT UG P4Q1 and FT UG Asian students. We will explore best practice models to support teaching delivery, assessment and feedback, personal academic tutoring, provision of accessible and representative learning materials and to support student success. This strategic approach will contribute to developing a wider regional sense of belonging (UUK and NUS, 2019, pp18)¹ and foster a cooperative approach as students transition from college to the University of Bolton in order to help close the gap in degree outcomes between targeted groups.

The evaluation of this will start in January 2022 as we identify partners across the region and university. From this we will identify and target specific interventions based upon the output of discussion with partners. These activities will each be incorporated into the EIF framework and, where appropriate, reported back to TASO. This project will be evaluated initially in 2022-23, then again after a full cycle in 2025-26, to determine its success and impact and reviewed accordingly to determine whether it will continue beyond 2025-26.

Peer Mentoring Framework

Peer learning is an important part of encouraging belonging and engagement at the University. We now have several active Peer Assisted Study Schemes (PASS) which are designed to provide co-curricular engagement opportunities for students. Our quality enhancement framework monitors the performance of these schemes and 16 PASS leaders have completed more than one year's worth of volunteering to date. A new online approach is currently in a pilot phase to be rolled out in Semester 1 of 2021-22, incorporating the evaluative toolkit provided by the European Centre for PASS.

We intend to enhance the current peer mentoring processes into a university wide framework that provides multiple mentoring processes, accessible to all enrolled students. The framework will have a specific focus on transition and support, incorporating an opt-out model where every student will be allocated a Peer Mentor at an appropriate point within the application, pre-enrolment and re-enrolment phase, including key transition points throughout their student journey.

A key aspect of the framework is to give students the option to request a peer mentor based upon how individual students self-identify, for example as BAME, disability, commuter, 'first in family' etc or through data as part of the early intervention and diagnostics processes, where Peer Mentors will be identified and suggested to students. This will also be incorporated into students' Action Plans. Evaluation of the Peer Framework including both 'informal' peer mentoring and formal Peer Mentoring such as PASS, and the processes that support it, will take place across the University with a focus on engagement and impact upon retention and attainment, particularly those in the under-represented groups.

Incorporation into the EIF has begun and expected to be complete by July 2022, with data from multiple points including Annual monitoring, Quality Assurance returns as part of the formal PASS processes and tracked data from the EI model. As this is a phased project with a rolling implementation spanning students across different intakes and programmes, the effectiveness of different interventions and activities will be measured and evaluated annually at the appropriate academic levels, in line with previous commitments, but also at individual level using the engagement monitoring and LEAP Diagnostics platform to track progression and attainment. As this is a student led and student delivered framework, we expect students to contribute to the evaluation with input from the student PASS Leaders, peer mentors and the Students Union. The first full cycle of evaluation and reflection will be completed for September 2025-26.

Covid-19 specific support

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, we continue to promote activities likely to encourage a sense of belonging (including social and sporting activities) and to uphold our attendance requirements. The University

¹ UUK and NHS, (2019, pp.18) Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic Students attainment at UK Universities: Closing the gap. <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2019/bame-student-attainment-uk-universities-closing-the-gap.pdf>. Online. Available. [Accessed May 2021]

has extensive measures in place to support students who are unable to fully engage due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation.

We have developed a new blended learning framework for teaching and learning (known as the 'Four Pillars' approach) which allows students to engage via remote learning, accompanied by on-campus practical sessions. Students who are unable to come on-campus can join via video-link. Assessment arrangements have been put in place to ensure, where possible, assessment briefs allow for remote completion/submission.

Emphasis has been placed on avoiding digital poverty, particularly important given the high number of students from under-represented backgrounds. Students' needs are assessed via the student support fund and laptops have been distributed to those in need, with personal tutors available for digital support. We have also enhanced our Hardship / Student Opportunity fund (which is strongly supported by our Students' Union) during this time. Details of this are shown under Section 4.1 below.

3.1.4.3 Measures to address the Continuation of Students with a Declared Disability and those in need of Mental Health Support

The University of Bolton has a large proportion of students declaring a disability (17.6% in 2018-19 compared to 15.8% nationally). The second highest disability declared (after Cognitive or Learning Disabilities) is mental health. We have seen a growing demand across the University for students needing to access mental health support from our Mental Health Advisors, Counsellors, CBT Services and Well-being Advisors. Students accessing these services are some of the most vulnerable students enrolled at the University of Bolton. Expansion of these support services and the accompanying additional investment is designed to facilitate better continuation and progression for those with a declared disability or those who encounter a mental health issue during their studies, through timely intervention and support.

The University is an active partner in the Greater Manchester Mental Health Service pilot, with the NHS and other local universities, providing a direct route to NHS support for those students referred by the University, enabling rapid intervention.

In March 2021, the University Executive Board approved the new Student Mental Health and Well-being Strategy 2021-2026. The aims of this strategy are to raise awareness and to reduce stigma about mental health issues, to foster a collegial, responsible, and supportive place of study, to enhance the well-being support available to students. The strategy identifies our current practice and what we will do next as a whole university approach to student mental health and well-being, the strategy has 55 new strategic areas/initiatives for development over the coming 5 years.

We will:

- continue to put our students at the centre of everything we do.
- continue to develop the mental health and well-being support services for students.
- provide guidance and training to relevant staff to support those students in need.
- strive to continually improve the student experience.
- develop independence amongst the student community.
- provide a safe place for students from all backgrounds, ways of life, beliefs and faiths that is non-judgmental and inclusive.
- help our students recognise their potential and develop their skills to allow them to progress, successfully, in their chosen careers.

This will be achieved through:

- strong leadership, providing role models for the student community.
- reconvening with new membership from across the University the University of Bolton Student Mental Health and Well-being Working Group for the implementation and oversight of the strategy and its developments.
- focussed interventions and support at transitional points.
- early identification of risk and prompt, effective responses.
- accessible and inclusive support services.
- breaking down barriers and addressing stigma.
- working with existing partners and stakeholders whilst continuously developing new relationships that can help our students achieve their goals.
- promoting healthy lifestyles and positive/healthy lifestyle choices.

- using robust data and research to inform future developments.
- working collaboratively with the Students' Union.
- responding to feedback and being prepared to change and adapt, this will include the development of further strategies and policies to enhance the student experience and student mental health and well-being.

The University student mental health and well-being service in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic created a new online resource area. Within the online resources there is a specific section of information advice and guidance that is targeted at BAME students, here there are details of several organisations who provide specific mental health and well-being services to members of the BAME community. These resources are continually reviewed, and we will look to expand on this information with other relevant appropriate information.

The student mental health and well-being service will in 2021-22, working with the Equality and Diversity Group, look at how best to develop new peer support groups. We have made a commitment in the Student Mental Health and Well-being Strategy 2021 to 2026 to review the support we provide to specific under-represented groups of students, including disabled students, widening participation and LGBTQ+ students with a view to increasing engagement and tailoring supports to meet their needs. We will explore and, if appropriate, develop support groups for 2020-21 and beyond. Such support groups could include male, BAME, LGBTQ groups working in partnership with appropriate external agencies.

The University has made a commitment to establish why continuation is better for those disabled students in receipt of DSA compared to those not in receipt of DSA. The University has a process established for considering reasonable adjustments for disabled students who are not in receipt of DSA. This process entails staff from across the University and Students' Union convening a disabled student support panel at which decisions are made as to what reasonable adjustments the University will fund.

The University will look at internal data closely to establish if a target is required. This will require looking at each disabled student who is not in receipt of DSA to see if they have declined the support that has been extended to them from the Disability Service, or if the student has been unable to evidence their disability. Once this has been undertaken, the University Disability Service will review the support for which the University is funding, including those reasonable adjustments that have been made by the University.

In addition to working with students with additional needs/disabilities and those who are need further pastoral support, it is intended that the Well-being Services will work closely with Careers Service staff to provide continuity of support to the students, and to help them achieve better overall outcomes. CFA which carried out the University's Customer Service Excellence assessment in September 2020 (described above) noted as good practice - "the University's extensive promotion and use of mental health and well-being support".

PROGRESSION

Since 2019, we have made a substantial investment in staffing within the Employment Team, including a Director of Jobs for Students, which has had a fundamental impact on student and staff engagement.

We are delivering on a three-year 'Employment Action Plan' from 2020-21 that consolidates elements of the University's Employability, Enterprise, and Apprenticeship Strategy, and focuses on:

- Streamlined and consolidated systems capturing and showcasing real time employability data.
- Clear responsibility and accountability.
- Consistent data markers to enable the build-up of multi-point real time reporting on employability progress.

All Schools now have a linked Careers Adviser and Employer Engagement Consultant and, in partnership, have developed Faculty Employment Plans which are being reviewed at bi-monthly meetings with all Deans and Heads.

As a further enhancement in 2019-20 the Jobs for Students team invested in ten Student Employment Champions to assist on outreach activities surrounding employability and the support services the University offers to students. A new self-assessment form has been designed, with feedback from the student Champions, allowing students to self-assess against employment skills and target their development and access to services.

A series of Student Focus Groups (Part of our Student Engagement Framework (see Section 3.2), commissioned by Senate and administered by the Standards and Enhancement Office), were undertaken in February 2020 seeking feedback on Employment Skills. Student participants on the focus groups were drawn from across the student population from a range of backgrounds, programmes, and levels. A member of the staff of the Students' Union attended as an observer of the focus groups. Findings were used to better inform the University's Employer Engagement Implementation plan. Key findings were also disseminated on behalf of Senate to Deans and Heads of Professional Services to inform their Local Plans for 2020-21.

The University offers an increasing range of apprenticeship provision, linked directly to employment, and is successfully attracting Mature students.

3.1.4.4 Measures to address the progression of BAME (and particularly Asian students) and IMDQ1 Students

We are working to improve progression for all our students through the following measures. The design of these interventions will allow the University to focus support for targeted Asian and IMDQ1 students.

- **Risk Dashboard:** We have developed an 'at risk' dashboard that assigns risk weightings based on several criteria, and links to the cohorts identified through the APP. This will be launched during academic year 2020-21. This dashboard will be constructed and tested by August 2021 and rolled out from September 2021. Data will be assessed each academic term and will be reviewed as part of the Jobs for Students team meetings. Any actions taken because of this review, will be shared at the monthly Deans/Heads meetings, so that major issues can be flagged and addressed. Actions from the Team will be captured in monthly team statistics.
- **Early Diagnostic and Career Registration Data:** as noted in Section 3.1.4.2 we have expanded the LEAP process to HE5, not only to further support retention activities, but also a series of employability questions have been built in at HE5, to help inform interventions relating to career planning. The Team have also embedded a Career Registration Workflow into our online career's portal. This takes data from the enrolment process and captures students career thinking and existing experiences. This data allows us to measure progress along the career planning continuum and will now feature as a KPI measure for the Team. Workflow has been created in May 2021. Testing will be completed by July 2021. Monitoring of data will form part of the monthly team review. Full evaluation of process to be completed by May 2022, and then based on review findings, process will be built into ongoing delivery cycle.
- **Student Hub:** We have invested heavily in our online 'Careers Portal'. This gives us greater capability to move careers assessments online and establish specific 'workgroups' for APP cohorts. This will allow us to provide greater targeting of information, resources, and opportunities.

Some specific activities include:

- **Skills Sessions:** The demand for our generic skills sessions in 2019-20 increased enormously with a 117% increase in engagement overall, compared to the year before, and we are monitoring the engagement of BAME and IMDQ1 students. We have devised several new sessions to support students, in light of the recent pandemic, and we have focused our attention on supporting them with resilience, navigating the labour market, and utilizing their time to best effect during this period. We have continued to deliver sessions aimed at the professions, such as Teaching, Accountancy and Law. All skills sessions and attendance are being reviewed monthly. Data from 2020-21 will be evaluated as part of the Careers team strategic review in summer 2021. Based on this review, changes will be made accordingly, to ensure that we are targeting relevant groups and addressing gaps. Feedback will be sought from students by July 2021 to aid planning.
- **Work-based Learning:** Significant investment in the Employer Engagement Consultants means we can increase the support we provide for students with placements, internships, and other work-based learning opportunities. We are also recruiting a new careers advisor role, whose focus will be on placement support for our students. We are working with academic areas to take ownership of the management of placement provision, and we are building in administrative processes, ensuring students not only have access to opportunities, but they are prepared fully before going out on placement. Again, we are monitoring the take up of these opportunities by BAME and IMDQ1 compared to other groups. A Placement Planning Group is to be established before September 2021. This will include key personnel from Schools, Careers and Student Data Management. A review of placement provision will be available by December 2021, which will include baseline data, exploration of processes and key KPIs for improvement. A review of the Employer Engagement role will be completed by June 2021 and a new Employer Engagement Strategy will be in place for September 2021. This will be sent to the Education Committee for approval in October 2021 and will then be monitored as part of the University annual planning process.
- **Case Studies:** The Team is working continuously to generate positive case studies, demonstrating the progression of those groups as identified by the APP. Our Graduate Support Adviser is also working to generate such case studies and enlist the help of our Alumni to deliver sessions and explore mentoring opportunities. Alumni involvement is being reviewed as part of the monthly team statistics. Student and Alumni feedback will be sought as sessions are delivered. Social media engagement forms part of the monthly reporting structure.
- **Online Resources:** We have invested in a new careers resource package (Abintegro) which provides access to careers and employability resources 24/7. Students can now check their CVs, access psychometric tests, industry journals and watch video content about job recruitment practices. Student engagement is

monitored as part of the monthly team statistics and reviewed on an ongoing basis. An annual review is held with the software provider at the start of each academic year, to ensure we are making the most of the resources available.

- **Careers & Entrepreneurship Showcase:** We will develop a targeted initiative aimed at enhancing progression for BAME, IMDQ1, and Disabled students, developing a dedicated careers event discussing the relationship between ethnicity, social background, disability, and employability with a focus on providing practical strategies to excel in the workplace. Planning for this event will take place in 2021-22 with a view to holding the event in November 2022. We will also work with the Student Experience Team to explore Alumni Mentoring (as part of the Peer Mentoring Framework, Section 3.1.4.2).

We plan to develop our curriculum to further embed employability. In 2019, we worked with an external consultant, Gradcore, to evaluate the changes that had previously been made to embed employability. Their recommendations included:

- **To refresh and refine our Graduate Attributes Matrix for Employability (GAME):** based on these findings, the University is now refreshing GAME with a range of new, positive indicators. We are creating new visuals, which will help to promote the revised and upgraded model. We have created a new GAME assessment tool within our online Careers Portal, and we are developing our new assessment process, based wholly around the GAME framework. We have started an institutional review of GAME. Consultation has begun and stakeholder feedback (staff, students and employers) will be gathered by July 2021. Executive Report has been drafted and will be sent May 2021. Amendments to the design and delivery of GAME within the curriculum will be implemented by January 2022.
- **To implement a recruitment participation model:** In 2020-21 we are piloting a new skills assessment process with programmes across HE4. This skills assessment will be modelled on GAME, and where possible, will involve participation from a range of employers. This will be scaled-up incrementally over the next three years. The pilot will be completed by June 2021. A review of the pilot will be undertaken in July 2021 and a report with recommendations / actions will be available by August 2021. Any new developments emerging from the pilot phase will be addressed before December 2021.

We have convened a Strategic Industry Advisory Boards (IAB) Working Group, chaired by one of our Deans to lead and advise on the establishment and continuous improvement of IABs across the University, with a view to ensuring a conduit for channelling employer feedback to inform curriculum development.

All the initial development and implementation of the progression measures above, are weighted in this/next academic year. Initial assessment of impact will be undertaken by August 2022. The findings of this assessment will then help to inform roll out and monitoring, as we move through this APP plan / timeline.

As a further initiative to improve attainment and progression gaps, Senate approved an approach to re-approve all eligible HE3, HE4 plus selected HE5 and HE6 provision standardising where possible on 4 x 30 credit modules in time for some delivery in 2019-20 academic year. These changes to the model were aimed at removing any impediments to attainment and progression, particularly in those areas where it was felt that assessment burden was not matched to the notional learning hours or lacked diversity that would impede inclusivity. A consultation exercise had been undertaken across all schools and proposals discussed at School Boards, which included student representation. The initiative is now 1 year further on and implemented for most programmes (some being delayed because of the COVID pandemic). Student and staff feedback has been largely positive as evidenced by Module Evaluation questionnaires, Staff Student Liaison Committee minutes, and School Board minutes.

3.2 Student consultation

Student voice and feedback is a key aspect of our plans including their development, implementation, progress review, refinement, continual improvement, and completion. Student Course Representatives, School Representatives, Senate Student Focus Groups, and the Students’ Union (including as part of their annual quality report) will play a critical role in achieving the planned outcomes. Students are members of the formal governance and management structures put in place to oversee the formulation and monitoring of the APP (see Section 3.4).

Several focus groups were held prior to the development of the previous APP to test students’ views and gather their ideas. This input continues to feed into the new plan. Students strongly endorsed existing proposals, the Students’ Union held numerous focus groups in 2020-21 to review with students the APP followed by a reflective meeting with the University to share feedback to inform the new APP. As a result, the SU General Manager has been added to the members of the APP Steering Group and we will continue to review and refine our approach to student feedback and consultation.

The SU President, representing the body of students, was consulted as part of the Governor’s Oversight Committee which gave detailed feedback and scrutiny of the drafts of the APP as part of the process. The plan was reviewed and signed off by the University of Bolton Board of which the SU President is a member. Similarly, the post-graduate student elected representative on the Governor’s Committee also reviewed and contributed to the plan.

Examples of student consultation on the specific initiatives linked to the delivery of our APP ambitions are embedded into various sections of this report, including but not limited to Sections 3.1.4.2, 3.1.4.3, and 3.1.4.4.

Institutionally, student engagement is orchestrated through the University Student Engagement Framework, consisting of Bolton Students Union (SU) activities; student representation on committees and panels; student surveys and other miscellaneous feedback mechanisms (such as Senate Student Focus Groups, Comments/suggestions cards, involvement in specific projects such as curriculum design groups, HEAR - Higher Education Achievement Report - group)

Bolton Students’ Union (SU) Activities	Student Representation on Committees and Panels	Student Surveys	Other Student Feedback Mechanisms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student feedback to the SU Engagement Team & President - SU Student Representative recruitment, selection and training. - Student-Led Teaching Awards - SU Annual Quality Report - “SU on Tour” - “Speak Week” – feedback on specific issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) - School Boards - Honorary awards Committee - Programmes Committee - University Standing Panels - Programme Approval Panels - Internal subject Reviews - Research Ethics Committee - Education Committee - Senate - Board of Governors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs) - National Student Survey - UK Engagement Survey - Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey - Customer Service Excellence (CSE) Survey: <i>Disability Service, Library, Reception, Student Advisors, Student Experience Team, Halls of Residence, Chaplaincy, Counselling, DBS Service, Student Funding</i> - Local Disability Service Survey - Careers Service Survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Senate-Student Focus Groups - Comments cards – Library, LEAP and Student Centre - Careers Service online feedback via Hub - Involvement in projects/ initiatives e.g. Curriculum Design Group, HEAR Group - Library and Careers Service Focus Groups - PASS (Peer-Assisted Study Support) feedback to SSLCs

Student engagement framework

Student Representatives are elected for each programme and meet staff regularly at Staff Student Liaison Committee meetings (once per Semester) and are invited to feed-back on programme organisation (including placements if applicable), learning, teaching and assessment, work-related learning / practice, personal academic tutoring and other support, induction, academic societies and career development opportunities.

Student representatives are also on each School Board - 3 meetings per year with key agenda items of Local plan including KPIs and Inclusivity, Learning, Teaching and the Student Experience, teaching resources. In addition, student representatives are members of Programmes Committee, Programme Approval Panels, Internal Subject Reviews, the Research Ethics Committee, Education Committee, Senate, and the Board of Governors.

A salaried Students Union Officer is specifically responsible for Academic Engagement (including recruitment and training of Student Representatives).

The SU President and SU Manager are both active on multiple University working groups including the Student Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Technology (STAT); and Student Experience Working Group (SEWG).

3.3 Evaluation strategy

The University of Bolton engaged in an evaluation self-assessment exercise, using the OfS toolkit, to reflect on its current evaluative strategies and methodologies. This exercise revealed evidence of good practice in the use of evaluative evidence in programme planning, collection of monitoring and evaluation data at an operational level and the use of evaluation to adapt and improve interventions.

Opportunities for improvement were identified, including:

- Further development of the existing Evaluation and Impact Framework to support a whole-institutional approach to evaluation of interventions; and
- appointment of a Monitoring and Evaluation Officer to provide further expertise in this area and support the implementation of an enhanced framework.

During 2019-20, the Evaluation and Impact Framework (EIF) was further developed by the APP Steering Group and in January 2021, our Monitoring and Evaluation Officer was appointed who now leads on evaluation strategy, reporting to the APP Steering Group.

We are fully adopting the EIF recommended by TASO alongside the Self-Evaluation Toolkit and we will fully explore the applicability of using the Financial Support Evaluation Toolkit from the OfS.

At this point in time, we are migrating all initiatives into this enhanced framework, after which we will be undertaking an initial, and subsequently, ongoing evaluation review and reporting cycles (reporting to the APP Steering Group), with a mind-set of continual improvement. Once all initiatives have been through their initial review, we will re-assess the Self-Assessment Toolkit.

A 5-point evaluation framework provides the basis for the University's EIF:

1. Strategic context: support for evaluation within the institutional culture. Executive-level leadership on the APP Steering Group and cross institutional membership of the Group.
2. Design of programmes: use of evidence and evaluation to inform programme design. Taking evidence from evaluation activities to inform the design of new programmes, based on 'what works'.
3. Design of impact evaluation: the standards of evidence and types of evaluation achieved. Embedding evaluation at the outset in programme design, this is part of our new project management approach. The OfS self-assessment tool will help to continually improve evaluative practice.
4. Implementation of evaluation: data strategy, resources, skills and expertise. Using a variety of qualitative and quantitative approaches according to the type of activity being undertaken.
5. Learning from evaluation: interpreting results, understanding the impact, using and sharing findings. Taking the findings to continually improve and develop innovative practice and to ensure that investment is channelled towards those activities which have greatest impact. The new EIF has been tested prior to rollout, see case study below.

The EIF was tested using the "Success4Life" project.

Success4Life is an established programme which targets looked after young people, using aspiration and confidence raising activities to support their future participation in Higher Education.

As the project was moving online for the first time in 2020, due to the COVID lockdown, it was identified as a potential pilot for the EIF. Participants included 8 learners from Greater Manchester in years 9-11, currently in local authority care. Participants were provided with internet access, laptops, and mobile phones through their local authority to participate with online learning. The project consisted of six 1.5-hour sessions, delivered through the online 'GoToWebinar' platform between Tuesday 21st July to 1st September. The project tested the suitability of the proposed EIF by following a suggested logic model and programme design paradigms. The findings were collated and provided in a report for the APP Steering Group which supported the proposed overall EIF design, though suggested differentiated levels of design/models at programme, project, and activity level to reflect different complexities.

Evaluation is considered in the design of student intervention programmes, with a clear rationale, including defined goals, outcome measures, targeting criteria, and informed by research at an activity and evaluation level. Evaluation has commenced for LEAP diagnostics and early intervention measures. Evaluation is included within the Strategic Measures of the APP, Section 3.1.4.

Strategic Context

We are implementing a whole-institution approach to evaluation through update and development of our EIF to encompass best practice and guidance from the OfS and other sources, such as the Centre for Transforming Access

and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO). Such analyses of the evidence will inform the design and delivery of all intervention programmes, with training for operational staff, further piloting to assess project feasibility, and periodic review of student interventions.

Programme Design

As part of the University's approach to continuous improvement, the updated EIF will critically analyse outcomes of APP interventions, showing the lasting impact of this work. This approach will include follow-up questionnaire surveys, focus groups, outcome reporting and case studies, allowing staff to monitor initial reactions alongside impact.

Evaluation Design

Our updated EIF will identify activity to evaluate alongside the appropriate types and quantities of data to be collected for each planned intervention. This will be guided by best practice from the OfS, other organisations such as TASO, and additional research.

Evaluation Implementation

The application of the EIF to the evaluation schedules is adopting existing GDPR compliant procedures for collection, analysis, and storage of evaluative data through the programme lifecycle and beyond. The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer will build on our specialist knowledge in this area.

Learning to Shape Improvements

Our EIF explicitly includes a philosophy of continuous improvement. It includes the internal dissemination of research findings through impact reporting across the institution and beyond (e.g., the evaluation of current 'best practice' via the resources and guidance available from TASO and the OfS).

Our findings from the initial and subsequent reviews of interventions (undertaken at least annually) will be shared with TASO on an ongoing basis. Contact will be made with TASO on how this is to be routinely achieved by the end of the Academic Year in order for us to understand the submission and response/feedback mechanisms. This is an additional commitment (see Section 2 p19).

Continually examining performance in this way, tightly aligned to our APP targets, enables focus on the evidence-based impact of our programmes, in keeping with our commitment to being 'research informed', and working proactively towards our access and participation targets.

Evaluating Financial Support

The University will evaluate financial support provided to students throughout the duration of this plan (including the Care Leavers' Bursary and Student Support Fund). Where appropriate, we will draw from best practice tools and the OfS Financial Support Toolkit to carry out this evaluation. The Hardship Fund (now known as the Student Support Fund) was evaluated in 2019-20 in accordance with the updated NASMA (National Association of Student Money Advisers) guidance and in consultation with the Students Union. In 2019-20 we did start work using the OfS' Financial Toolkit. We had a survey ready to launch and plans to setup focus groups. This was then delayed due to the Cube Fire in November 2019. Unfortunately, we did not launch the surveys in early 2020 due to the start of the pandemic and changes we had to make to ensure we could continue to support students during the lockdown.

We have, as such, committed to complete this evaluation this year (2021) instead, with the aim again being to reach as many students as possible to gather information on whether the awards are beneficial and fit for purpose. We have constructed two surveys to reach out to specific student pools. Survey 1 will be for any students in receipt of a Bursary/Scholarship included within our APP. Survey 2 will be for any students applying to the UoB student support fund during this academic year. We have set out targets for the implementation of these surveys along with other methods and analysis:

End-May 2021

We will be inviting eligible students to complete a survey. This will include a reminder after three weeks for students to complete the surveys and submit their feedback. We aim to boost participation by offering entry into a prize draw to win £40 worth of vouchers by submitting a completed survey. We estimate that in total the student pool will be approximately: 30 students for the Bursaries and Scholarship survey and 50 for the Student Support Fund survey.

Mid-June 2021

By Mid-June, we hope to have gathered all the responses possible from students and will begin the process of collating the data and completing our analysis and evaluation of this data.

End of June 2021

By the end of June, we aim to have analysed all the data from the surveys and be able to move on to organising Focus Groups with students. We aim to invite as many students as possible to attend a Virtual Focus Group where we can discuss the Bursaries and Scholarships/Student Support Fund in more detail and provide them with a platform to express any feedback they wish to share regarding any stage of the awards.

End of July 2021

By the end of July, we aim to have fully analysed all data from the Focus Groups as well as the Surveys, so we are in a position to complete a full analysis and evaluation of the results of the project as a whole. This will lead us to the final stage of our process.

End of 2021

By the end of August, after students have received their final examination results, we aim to start working with our Data analysis team, to complete the statistical analysis (we are currently exploring the extent to which we may be able to use the OfS financial toolkit to evaluate the Student Support Fund and bursaries with a view to using the various tools where possible). Due to the constraints on when this can be completed, namely after the students have finished their courses, this will take place as close to the end of the academic year as possible. When undertaking the statistical analysis of the Student Support Fund, using internal data set, we will look only at those students who received an award in the form of a cash grant, this will be considered as a bursary payment. We will aim to undertake this only for those students for whom this plan identified we are closing a gap in performance. We will review the success of this and adjust accordingly in future years.

Informing Strategic Measures

As part of our updated EIF, the University will evaluate the success and impact of each of its strategic measures and associated initiatives or activities. This evaluation will deliver evidence of pre and post-intervention changes in behaviour, contribution towards achieving our targets, and of perceived success amongst students and other stakeholders. We will use a range of qualitative and quantitative techniques to undertake and deliver on our evaluation commitments.

Examples of continuous improvement in support of our APP targets are listed below:

- Delivery of access initiatives virtually means there is potential for reaching additional learners through our activities.
- Development of online booking systems for our student support activities.
- Development of online live chat functionality for students to engage with student service teams.
- Development of online PASS mentoring provision.
- Development of cross-platform access to personal tutoring.
- Automated dissemination of early intervention plans to key staff and the student and identification of health and well-being support needs.
- Provision of laptops to those students in need during pandemic has encouraged more flexible access to IT systems, online resources and LEAP online.
- Development of online careers portal
- Early identification of additional support for employability introduced.
- Moving careers fair online has improved engagement levels significantly by both graduate employers and students – these will continue beyond pandemic.

It is the responsibility of the APP Steering Group and APP work strand sub-groups to consider and act on the findings of these reports, adjusting our strategic measures accordingly in a timely manner with a view to continuous improvement. Reports to Senate and to University Governors will provide assurance that our Theory of Change is on target, highlighting any areas of risk or underperformance alongside areas of best practice. It will be the responsibility of the relevant officers on the Steering Group to ensure implementation of recommendations and actions, and to disseminate these to project leaders and the wider University community.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Officer is key to progressing the evaluation strategy, working with others across the student life cycle, and will:

- be responsible for leading on the continual development, updating and implementation of the University's EIF. A working group has recently been set up to review and further enhance the EIF, using the OfS self-assessment toolkit, with initial reporting to the Steering Group in March 2021. The Steering Group adopted the TASO EIF and committed to using the Self-Assessment Toolkit and exploring applicability of the Financial

Support Evaluation Toolkits, where appropriate, and we are now in process of migrating all initiatives into this framework.

- undertake an annual review using the OfS Standards of Evidence and Evaluation Self-Assessment Tool to gauge progress and improvement.
- investigate the extent to which we may be able to use the OfS financial toolkit to evaluate the Student Support Fund and bursaries with a view to using the various tools where possible. We will have completed this exercise by the end of the 2021 calendar year and will report our intentions as part of the 2020-21 monitoring return.
- deliver individual project reports at relevant intervals together with an overarching evaluation progress report to the Steering Group and take responsibility to project-manage overall delivery of the APP.
- source a variety of quantitative internal and external data, undertake analysis of that data, making use of mathematical modelling, complex statistical analysis (such as linear/logistic regression, cluster, nearest-neighbour, or random forest analysis) together with visualisation techniques to create accessible and easily interpreted results that are robust and credible.
- undertake qualitative research using both primary and secondary sources, employing a range of qualitative research techniques, such as facilitating focus groups and running surveys, including organising and managing the support of student researchers or other volunteers when required.

The APP Steering Group will continue to oversee and monitor the implementation, evaluation, and impact of interventions in the plan. This Group includes senior managers from across the institution, which helps to drive cultural change and ensures delivery of the core elements of the APP across the student lifecycle, together with Student Union representation. Members include:

- Assistant Vice Chancellor - Transformation (Chair of the Group).
- Assistant Vice Chancellor - Planning and Student Experience.
- Director of Marketing and UG Recruitment and Admissions.
- Director of Student Services and Experience.
- Associate Director - Corporate Intelligence and Data Integrity.
- Academic Registrar.
- Director of Jobs for Students.
- Head of Careers and Employability.
- Deputy Student Services Manager.
- Dean of Faculty.
- Head of Collaborative Provision Partnerships.
- SU General Manager.
- Head of Finance.
- Monitoring and Evaluation Officer.

3.4 Monitoring progress against delivery of the plan

The University has established a Governors' Oversight Committee, a subcommittee of the Board of Governors, chaired by an independent member of the governing body, which has a remit to oversee the development, implementation, and performance monitoring of the APP. The Student Union President is included within this Committee, as are four of the University's executive team. It receives regular reports on the incremental progress in delivering the plan, including performance against targets; provides the governing body with regular reports and ensures the University is putting in place and maintaining adequate levels of resource. The Oversight Committee has been involved during the formulation of this APP, giving detailed scrutiny prior to its formal approval by the Board of Governors, and will continue to monitor its progress.

Progress and performance data against targets is formally reviewed by the APP Steering Group, which holds responsibility for the delivery and monitoring of the plan. It meets as a minimum at least once each Semester, with formal reporting to Senate. Review against targets and commitments is a standing agenda item and as such new data is reviewed in a timely manner. Any deviations from the expected delivery of the measures are highlighted, with issues identified and appropriate remedial action requested to bring the measures back into line; should the measures need to be re-considered / adapted in the light of contextual factors then this would be taken into account. Any significant performance concerns would be raised through the University's Executive Board.

A data dashboard has been developed for ease of monitoring and this has been cascaded to academic areas to enable identification of any underperformance at a granular level. It is planned to further develop the project management tool with RAG ratings to help identify any measures which are of concern.

Responsibility for leading on improvement for any areas of concern would be clearly allocated, most likely, to the senior manager with responsibility for the respective stage of the student life cycle, although it is recognised that other senior student life cycle / student support / academic colleagues would be involved in any resulting work packages.

More informal cascading of the APP and reporting of progress across the University takes place at the monthly Core Operations Group meeting attended by academic colleagues.

4. Provision of information to students

We aim to provide full information to students, parents, advisers, and employers about the costs involved in undertaking their course and the financial support available from the Government or from the University. Details of the level of tuition fees (including details of the first year's fee and fee for the total duration of the course), other living costs, and support will be available:

- on the University's website.
- at Open Days.
- HE fairs and during visits to schools and colleges.
- from student advisers located in the Student Centre and the Student Union Advice Unit.
- on social media at relevant points during the recruitment cycle.
- from UCAS and the Student Loans Company.

Furthermore, tuition fees (first year fee and total for the duration of the course) is detailed on any offer letter sent to the student and on the invitation to enrol. This fixes the annually fee for the duration of the course and confirms that there will be no fee increase during the normal duration of the course.

We continue to review this information considering CMA guidance. We are committed to continuing 'No Hidden Extras Guarantee' which states that, subject to some exceptions, undergraduate students will not have to pay for any additional costs or fees which are mandatory for the completion of their course.

We are planning to introduce a new section of our website specifically outlining the range of activities and initiatives set out within this plan during the 2020-21 academic year. We will continue to develop our 24/7 offer through our online 'Student Hub' portal, including jobs, placements, employability events and a self-service appointment booking system, more tailored communications to under-represented groups and 'workgroups' facilitating targeted campaigns and access to 1-1 support.

4.1 Continuation of Students in need of Financial Support

The University of Bolton continues to use guidance supplied by the National Association of Student Money Advisers (NASMA) for the administration of the Hardship fund. The University Hardship Fund is designed to support students who experience an unexpected financial problem/crisis. The fund offers both monetary and non-monetary support. Monetary support includes emergency loans to those students experiencing delays in securing funding from Student Finance England (SFE), standard award grants for those students with a shortfall of income, non-standard discretionary grants for those students who may have a surplus income but can demonstrate without funds their continued studies are at risk, food vouchers and travel vouchers. Non-monetary support includes budgeting advice and referral to specialist services e.g., in relation to debt management, benefits and gambling.

The 'Care Leavers Award' (Section 3.1.4.1) and 'Military Ex-Service Personnel Award' (Section 3.1.2) have been previously detailed.

Student Support Fund (formally the Hardship Fund) opportunity fund:

General conditions for all applicants applying to the Hardship Fund:

- **Residency** – Students must fulfil the residency criteria for receiving the UK statutory student support package.
- **Sources of Other Funding** – Students must have applied for all other assistance to which they are entitled/ for which they may be eligible before an award from the fund is considered. This can include student loans, benefits, bursaries and scholarships, interest free student overdrafts, part-time work, money from family etc.
- **Attendance and Effort** - To get a payment, students must be enrolled on a course, and actively attending, with an attendance of 75% or higher, unless they are on placement or intercalating, in which case special conditions may apply. Student Services staff will interview all students who apply and have an attendance of less than 75% to discuss the cause of the low attendance and establish whether this is linked with the need for financial support.

Levels of Financial Support Available from the Hardship Fund:

Emergency Loans

Emergency loans are available to any new home or EU student who can demonstrate that they have insufficient funds to afford essential costs such as food and travel to and from the University whilst they are awaiting Student Finance England to assess their eligibility for core funding. Emergency loans are capped at £320 for 2020-21.

Food Vouchers

Food vouchers are available to any student who can demonstrate that they have insufficient funds to purchase food. Food vouchers are issued throughout the academic year and are awarded by the Student Services Team Leader on the recommendation of either the Student Funding Advisor, Mental Health Advisor or University Counselling Service. Food vouchers are normally issued up to the value of £60 per applicant.

Student Support Fund Grants

Students with children or caring responsibilities, students with a disability or final year students are considered a priority for financial support payments from the fund and are subject to a robust income and expenditure assessment. Students who have a financial shortfall can receive up to £2000 per academic year in the year 2021, this increased from £1000 in the 2019-20 academic year in our response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Students without a shortfall of income and when an assessment demonstrates a surplus can be considered for a non-standard award capped at £300.

In the 2021 academic year, we are also considering awards up to £300 if the student is able to demonstrate they are unable to access IT Equipment. Alternatively, the Student Support Fund will support these students in loaning IT equipment in our response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

100 Year Anniversary of The Great War Award (Mature Students)

The University offers financial support to ex-service personnel via the 100 Year Anniversary of the Great War Award. These awards are offered to ex-service personnel who have completed a minimum of 3 years military service since their eighteenth birthday in the British Armed Forces. The award reflects the 100 years since the beginning of the First World War in 1914. Due to the eligibility criteria for the award the award is targeted at Mature students who will be 21 or over at the point of entry to the University and is paid in each year of their study. This award is to assist in our commitment of increasing the participation of ex-service personnel who study at the University. We will look at the feasibility of using the OfS Financial Toolkit and assess if it is appropriate to use.

University of Bolton

Access & Participation Plan

Appendix: Variations (for 2023-24)

Background

In February 2022, the Office for Students (OfS) set out new priorities for Access and Participation Plans ("Plan") and requested Variations be submitted for the academic year 2023-24 setting out how providers will address those priorities. This will be followed by the submission of new Plans for the years 2024-25 to 2027-28 during Summer 2023, where we expect to undertake a fundamental review of all goals and targets, looking to ensure these reflect our particular context and student cohort.

Here, we set out how the University of Bolton (UoB) is already addressing these priorities, how we intend to do so and proposed areas for improvement. It should be noted that in February 2022 we began consultations on an Academic Strategy Green Paper which will affect the new Plan for submission in Summer 2023 (for 2024-25 to 2027-28).

There are no financial changes needed for the Targets & Investment Plan already submitted, though two targets have been re-defined (see below).

Variations Planned for 2022 Monitoring Return

Our existing plan has two targets that relate to IMD (2015) measures – PTS_4 and PTP_1. We committed to use the IMD (2019) measure instead during 2021-22. The data showed little difference for us, so we have retained the same numerical targets as follows:

Specific Target	Between / Group	OfS Reference	From	To	Start Value (2017-18)	Target Value (2024-25)	Milestone (2025-26)	OfS Data Release Mar 2020 (for 2018-19)	OfS Data Release Mar 2021 (for 2019-20)	OfS Data Release Mar 2022 (for 2020-21)
To reduce the gap in good degree outcomes (1st and 2:1)	FT UG students from IMD (2015) Q1 and IMD (2015) Q5	PTS_4	2020-21	2024-25	25%	15%	4%	17%	24%	
	FT UG students from IMD (2019) Q1 and IMD (2019) Q5	(new) PTS_4	2020-21	2024-25	25%	15%	4%	14%	25%	15%
To reduce the gap in graduate level employment	PT UG IMD (2015) Q1 and IMD (2015) Q5 students	PTP_1	2020-21	2024-25	17.5%	7.5%	5%	15%	15%	
	PT UG IMD (2019) Q1 and IMD (2019) Q5 students	(new) PTP_1	2020-21	2024-25	n/a	7.5%	5.0%	15%	18%	18%

Within the Targets & Investment Plan:

- PTS_4 is replaced by PTS_7; and
- PTP_1 is replaced by PTP_3.

Variations

Priority A – APP ("Plan") Summary Document

This is provided as a separate document and forms part of the Variation submission to the OfS.

Priority B – School Partnerships and Attainment Raising

We remain committed to working collaboratively with other higher education providers, FE colleges, schools, third sector organisations and employers in the region.

We will do this as a key partner in the Greater Manchester Higher (GMH) project, part of the OfS funded Uni Connect programme, whose approach to raising attainment will begin with an audit of attainment raising activity delivered by partner providers, to ensure that GMH attainment-raising work is complementary to existing work and does not duplicate efforts. Once complete, the steering group and governance board will review the gaps in provision and

consult with partners and schools on the approach to developing plans for GMH. These reviews will be written into a plan, as requested, by May 2023. In the meantime, GMH expects to pilot some small-scale attainment-raising activities using the expertise of partner organisations who will bid into a central pot to secure funding for projects.

Development of existing work

We will continue with the following areas of outreach and attainment-raising:

- **University Collegiate School (part of the QUEST Multi-Academy Trust (MAT))** - The MAT is a Partner Member of the University Group and the school, is co-located on the University campus. We will continue to work closely with QUEST and the school to deliver outreach activities and pilot our new initiatives in attainment raising.
- **Saturday Club** – The University of Bolton is a member of the National Saturday Club, offering free art and design enrichment classes to young people. We plan to expand current provision to provide additional opportunities in other key curriculum areas.
- **Boys' Brigade** - The University of Bolton formed a unique partnership with Boys' Brigade in 2020 and we worked together to develop a national Higher Education transitional programme for boys and girls from low participation and deprived backgrounds, which will launch in September 2022. The 'Explore & Plan' and 'Plan & Become' badges will be available to over 1,000 young people from ages 11-18 and aim to support them to develop the skills they need to make informed choices about their futures.
- **International Centre for Educational Enhancement (ICEE)** - In addition to our education and teacher training provision, we have established the ICEE which brings together learning and research to the practice of participants at school, college, and Higher Education, both internationally and locally. It offers CPD, postgraduate and doctoral programmes in teacher and educational leader development, with networking and collaboration through the research focussed Laboratory School and Centre, to build capacity for school improvement.
- **Bolton Lads and Girls Club** - The University is a platinum patron of the Bolton Lads and Girls Club and offers venue support for their programme of events and activities aimed at young people. We plan to expand this partnership by providing sessions and support to enhance existing projects aimed at targeted learners such as care experienced young people.

Our recently revised outreach strategy encompasses short-, medium- and long-term plans intended to support attainment-raising with pre-16 learners. We plan to develop our strategy in partnership with key stakeholders within local authorities, community organisations and most importantly schools, to provide additional support and building on our unique strengths.

Metacognition

We plan to build upon our successes by expanding programmes already addressing issues related to attainment. For example, the University's flagship outreach project aimed at White Working-Class Boys - "**Mission:HE**" - already supporting learners to develop metacognitive skills (an awareness of one's thought processes and an understanding of the patterns behind them), allowing them to develop practical strategies to support their studies.

We have delivered Mission:HE programmes face-to-face on four occasions in 2021-22 into Academies, in areas with high levels of deprivation and/or lack of participation in Higher Education, reaching approximately 55 young people across the Greater Manchester region.

We intend to:

- **Short-term.** Build on research ([Metacognition and self-regulation | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)) to further enhance a sustained outreach programme based around metacognition principles.
- **Medium-term.** Develop a CPD programme for teaching staff to become leaders in metacognition in their own establishments.
- **Long-term.**
 - Create a 'Metacognition Programme' supporting schools and pre-16 educational establishments to deliver metacognition within their curriculum design, enabling students to build habits and mechanisms that support their COVID-19 recovery learning experience.
 - Work with schools and established practitioners to deliver a programme of CPD for staff supporting learning and teaching - ranging from teaching assistants, early-career teachers and those needing to adapt their practice to benefit the needs of the students.

School Governors

Working to foster closer relationships with local schools, we plan to identify, support, and expand the number of staff acting as school governors in the local area, and continue work with Governors For Schools ([Governors for Schools - Effective Governors, Excellent Schools](#))

Hard To Reach Students

Our long-term vision is to collaborate with local authorities supporting gaps in attainment with hard-to-reach groups such as those in Pupil Referral Units (PRUs). We will also look to create a mentoring programme to be utilised with students within the Youth Offenders Service, Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCP).

Long-term work will be conducted to produce bespoke mentoring for the above groups and identifying best practice for raising attainment for Black Males such as the work completed by "*Becoming a Man (BAM)*."

Priority C – Successful Participation and Good Graduate Outcomes

As we implemented the Evaluation Impact Framework (EIF) (see below) all interventions have been reviewed against the Plan's goals and targets. Several improvements have been made to help understand and close any gaps, specifically for the Plan but also more broadly across the whole student cohort.

We aim to understand the individual needs of our students and tailor their learning opportunities, from the wide range of interventions and initiatives available, to help them succeed and thereby addressing the target areas within our Plan.

Summary of Targets and Applicable Interventions

OfS Reference	Specific Target	Between / Group	Specific Intervention
PTS_3	Reduce the gap in Good Degree Outcomes	FT Young Students POLAR4Q1 to POLAR4Q5	<p>Elements of LEAP Ahead/Online with second data review Summer 2022 to focus further on POLAR4Q1-Q5</p> <p>Peer Assisted Study Support – migrating into EIF Summer 2022. Review to assess performance on this target</p> <p>Peer Mentoring – finish review and migration into EIF (Summer 2022) with analysis focused on this target</p> <p>Personal Academic Tutoring – improvement action for POLAR4Q1-Q5 taken following initial EIF Review</p> <p>Additional work on this target planned via APP Operations Group following UoB internal annual monitoring review.</p>
PTS_7 (new) replacing PTS_4	""	FT students IMD(2019)Q1 to IMD(2019)Q5	<p>Elements of LEAP Ahead/Online with second data review Summer 2022 to focus further on IMDQ1-Q5</p> <p>Peer Assisted Study Support – finish incorporation into EIF Summer 2022. Review to assess performance on this target</p> <p>Peer Mentoring – finish incorporation into EIF (Summer 2022) with analysis focused on this target</p> <p>Personal Academic Tutoring – improvement action for IMDQ1-Q5 taken following initial EIF Review.</p>
PTS_5	""	FT UG Black students and White students	<p>Student (BAME) Ambassadors – to be re-focused as part of migration into EIF and initial review</p> <p>Personal Academic Tutoring – improvement action for BAME students taken following initial EIF Review</p> <p>Additional work on this target planned via APP Operations Group following UoB internal annual monitoring review.</p>
PTS_6	""	FT UG Asian students and White students	<p>Student (BAME) Ambassadors – to be re-focused as part of migration into EIF and initial review</p> <p>Personal Academic Tutoring – improvement action for BAME students taken following initial EIF Review</p> <p>Additional work on this target planned via APP Operations Group following UoB internal annual monitoring review.</p>
PTS_1	Reduce the gap in Continuation	FT UG Black students and White students	<p>Student (BAME) Ambassadors – to be re-focussed as part of migration into EIF and initial review</p> <p>Peer Mentoring – finish review and migration to EIF (Summer 2022) with analysis focussed on this target</p>
PTS_2	""	FT UG Asian students and White students	<p>Student (BAME) Ambassadors – to be re-focussed as part of migration into EIF and initial review</p> <p>Peer Mentoring – finish review and migration to EIF (Summer 2022) with analysis focussed on this target</p>

n/a	""	FT UG Mixed ethnicity students and White	Student (BAME) Ambassadors – to be re-focussed as part of migration into EIF and initial review Peer Mentoring – finish review and migration to EIF (Summer 2022) with analysis focussed on this target
PTP_3 (new) replacing PTP_1	Reduce the gap in Graduate-Level employment	PT UG IMD (2019) Q1 and IMD (2019) Q5 students	Career Registration ; Early Diagnostics ; Introduced Employability Bursary to support students with interviews and associated expenses incurred (May 2021 but after Plan submission).
PTP_2	""	FT UG Asian and White students	Student (BAME) Ambassadors ; Professions Workshops ; Confidence-building sessions ; Bolton Award participation and video case studies, Alumni case studies.; "1 Million Mentors" ; Personal Academic Tutoring – improvement action for BAME students taken following initial EIF Review

Work has begun with the Deans and Schools to determine:

- how our annual Subject Quality Enhancement Plans relate to the Plan goals and targets;
- whether there are gaps within CAH-2 Subject areas;
- what local 'School/Subject' initiatives are already in place; and
- the associated initiatives, evaluative approaches and student consultation to inform development of our new Plan in Summer 2023.

The following is a summary of the improvements made to interventions. All impact on the Plan for 2023-24, and subject to ongoing evaluation, are anticipated to continue through the period of the next Plan.

Successful Participation

The new Retention Working Group is focused on structural and procedural issues having an impact on student retention. Core areas where improvements to process, evaluation and target areas have been made are:

- Retention Data sets review
- Withdrawal Process improvements
- Personal Academic Tutoring improved and rolled out.
- Referrals to Professional Support improved.
- Off-Campus partners exchange of practice on retention and attainment.

(See Goals & Targets Review below for further work planned in this area)

Graduate Outcomes / Progression

We have reviewed and re-assessed our approaches across all areas and are in the process of developing an improved strategy that includes generic and targeted interventions. The core areas are:

- A new Graduate Employment Strategy is currently being written to take the work forward over the next three years.
- New working groups have been established to monitor progression outcomes – Graduate Outcomes; Placement Development; Enterprise; and Knowledge Exchange.
- Improved approach to driving and delivering a data-driven approach to student careers and employability, and to increase engagement of students in the development, targeting and promotion of service activities.
- Roll-out of Career Registration with a specific workflow being built and embedded into our online careers portal. An updated communication plan has been devised providing targeted communications to all year groups. Employability diagnostics have been produced ready for roll-out to HE5 and HE6.
- We continue to focus on embedding employability within the curriculum and ensuring it is 'unavoidable.' A University-wide review of our graduate-attributes models, **GAME** and **GAME+**, is underway.
- Work is in progress developing external relationships and creating a new Employer Engagement Strategy, focused on working with employers to identify their higher-level skills needs, and to work with Faculties to develop provision, and build capability and capacity to respond effectively.
- We have established a new Central Industry Advisory Board (CIAB) whose remit is to oversee Industry Advisory Boards across the University and other partners.
- We are developing a graduate CPD programme for 2022-23 which will incorporate recruitment activities, confidence building and careers support.

Delivery of skills sessions remains a focus for the Careers Team, and we have introduced new topics such as Confidence Building and Leadership Skills. These have been concentrated on our targeted groups, particularly Asian and IMDQ1 students.

Goals & Targets Review and Changes

Successful Participation

Though not required for submission in 2022, we undertook an internal review for Annual Monitoring purposes. Our position has improved slightly in relation to our Plan targets, although three areas for incremental work are identified to be taken forward by the APP Operations Group. We have also improved our position in relation Commitments and areas for Monitoring detailed in the current Plan.

Areas for planned additional focus against our Plan targets are detailed here, despite absolute attainment rates in all three having improved again:

- OfS PTS_5 – see Table above:
 - Attainment rates for all Ethnicities improved again in 2020-21. Black from 50% to 61%, and White 74% to 82%, decreasing the gap.
- OfS PTS_6 – see Table above:
 - Attainment rates for all Ethnicities improved again in 2020-21. Asian from 53% to 59%, White 74% to 82%, slightly widening the gap.
- OfS PTS_3 – see Table above:
 - Attainment rate for all quintiles increased again in 2020-21. Quintile 1 from 70% to 73% and Quintile 5 from 76% to 88% so the gap has widened.

Graduate Outcomes/Progression

The update to the OfS Dashboard using Graduate Outcomes (GOS) data rather than DLHE is due Autumn 2022. We have undertaken a review of internal data – from the GOS datasets - identifying potential focus areas. This will inform our decision-making processes ahead of submission of the new Plan in Summer 2023. Potential areas are:

Highly Skilled Employment or Further Study

Gender, Ethnicity, Age, POLAR4 and IMD.

Employment or Further Study

Disability, Ethnicity, Age, POLAR4, and IMD.

Support for specific disadvantaged student groups

We have for several years offered financial support to students who are Care Leavers. £1000 per academic year was awarded to students who could evidence spending 12 months or more in a care setting in the previous 5 years prior to joining the University.

From 2021-22 the Care Leavers' Bursary became the Care Experienced Bursary. To qualify, students must have spent 13 weeks or more in care between the ages of 14 and 18 and be under 25 years of age at the start of their course. The Care Experienced Bursary remains at £1000 p.a. plus an additional £500 at the point of graduation. Using the EIF, the previous Care Leavers' Bursary showed improved retention and attainment rates of Care Leavers when compared to Care Leavers who, for whatever reason, did not receive an award.

The Care Experienced Bursary is now part of a broader package of support, including:

- Personalised Birthday/Christmas Card and Voucher;
- Financial Health Checks including Budgeting provided by the Student Funding Advisor;
- Support with accommodation and securing accommodation with our preferred provider of student accommodation;
- Dedicated point of contact throughout the application process and during the period of study;
- Preferential treatment for the University Student Support Fund, formerly the Hardship Fund;
- Fast track access to Mental Health and Wellbeing Support following a self-referral/referral;
- Additional support from the University Careers Service.

In June 2021, the University achieved the National Care Leavers' Quality Mark and was eligible to join the National Network for the Education of Care Leavers Association. We have also signed the Care Leavers Covenant.

Priority D – Diverse Pathways, Flexible Courses and Degree Apprenticeships

The University has undergone significant growth in apprenticeship numbers:

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
197	458	580	815	1063

From 2019-20, the number of apprenticeship pathways has increased from around 20, to over 30 and is forecast to increase by a further 15+ for 2022-23.

Achievement rates for the last two academic years along with the associated National rates are

Year	National	UoB
2019/20	45.2%	87.2%
2020/21	51.8%	84.5%

We have adopted a 'Work Based Trainer Model' to ensure schools are aligned to meeting employer needs and can address skills gaps in the key industry sectors both within Greater Manchester and further afield.

Apprenticeships are becoming the preferred training route in various priority sectors such as health and engineering. They are a substantial addition to our core business and position us as an employer-facing university. The University together with the wider University Group, (Bolton College and Alliance Learning) is currently developing progression pathways across a full range of disciplines and key sectors from Level 2 through to Level 7.

For future planning and growth, we are focusing on three key areas:

1. Develop targets for apprenticeship income and recruitment at academic school level to facilitate sustainable growth;
2. Work with academic schools in the development of their apprenticeship portfolio and associated infrastructure in line with industry sectoral demand; and
3. Develop the infrastructure of the central apprenticeship team to ensure Ofsted and ESFA compliance is maintained.

As Apprentices are already employed, they are identified by their employer to participate in the Apprenticeship programmes and, as such, we have limited influence on those selected. However, we will be undertaking analysis of student characteristics and performance to inform development of our new Plan ahead of Summer 2023.

To support this, we have undertaken a preliminary analysis of our Apprentice students:

Apprentices currently on Programme:	Areas with large apprenticeship cohorts:	Apprentices who have withdrawn (all time)	Completers Overall	Age of apprentices on programme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70% Female of which 11% are BAME 30% Male of which 16% are BAME 12% of overall current cohort are BAME 5% have declared a learning difficulty/disability 	<p>Engineering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17% Female 83% Male 10% BAME <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 82% Female 18% Male 12% BAME 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 42% Female 58% Male 6% BAME 8% learning difficulty/disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 86% Female 14% Male 35% BAME 16% learning difficulty/disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18-24 21% 25-30 25% 31-40 32% 41-50 18% 51+ 4%

Within our Academic Strategy Green Paper (February 2022) which is at the consultation stage, areas identified include:

- Exploration of short courses with an accredited CPD offer (Level 4-7 courses); and
- A 'Group Approach' to growth in Apprenticeships/Work-Based Learning.

In addition, Bolton College (a subsidiary within the University of Bolton Group) has been at the forefront of the introduction of T-levels, having initially introduced four areas in 2021-22. Work is underway to prepare for the implementation of Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQ), particularly within Bolton College, but supporting our partners more broadly. This preparation will continue over the next year in advance of the new Plan.

Evaluation Impact Framework

We have a continued commitment to evaluation of interventions, and

- Have fully adopted the Evaluation Impact Framework (EIF) developed and promoted by TASO : [Evidence & Evaluation - TASO](#).
- Each intervention has been fully reviewed, methods of evaluation implemented or improved, with actions determined for the next year and review dates set.

Currently (July 2022) we have the following initiatives:

Fully within the Framework:

- Success4Life;
- Early Diagnostic Data;
- Student Financial Support;
- Personal Academic Tutoring;
- Career Registration Data;
- LEAP (Learning Excellence Achievement Pathway).

In transition or at initial review stage:

- Peer Assisted Study Support (PASS) (paused during the pandemic – update review completed);
- Welcome & Induction Programme (re-design to expand and improve existing process).

Expanded or re-designed interventions to be brought into EIF:

- Peer Mentoring;
- Student Engagement & Consultation;
- Student (BAME) Ambassadors.

OfS Assessment Toolkits

For the **OfS Financial Toolkit**, there is insufficient University data to feed the recommended logistic regression model.

We used the **OfS Self-Assessment Toolkit** for evaluation in May 2019 and then in March 2022 after implementing the EIF, and have found a significant improvement in our position, though there is still work to be done.

Structural and Unexplained Gaps

In the current Plan, we committed to this work which is now complete. The volume of data from the institutional data files was insufficient to generate results for the University, using the OfS logistic regression model, with any reasonable level of statistical confidence.

The work *did* provide evidence of two major compounding factors which impact all our APP areas. The factors are:

- The proportion of mature students is significantly higher than most other higher education providers (75% on latest OfS Data – March 2022); and
- Entry qualifications are significantly lower across the whole student cohort.

Further evaluation and analysis, looking at *how* these affect our work, goals and targets is planned prior to submission of our new APP.

Phases of Evaluation introduction

We will follow TASO guidelines, advice, and research – contributing to the body of evidence as and when we can. Interventions will be adjusted/removed in accordance with the “What Works” framework as this develops. At this stage, all interventions are at ‘Type 1’ (narrative) with some limited work at ‘Type 2’ (empirical enquiry).

We will consider how we can incorporate independent evaluation.

Staff Awareness

To support staff awareness and understanding we have developed a suite of eLearning modules, covering

- Explanation of the Plan and why it is important;
- Data Analysis Techniques from a non-technical perspective.

It is planned these will be uploaded to the Staff Development Portal as ‘required’ learning.

Internal Structures

We reviewed internal operational and reporting structures for the Plan.

- The APP Steering Group remains the panel overseeing the Plan ahead of reporting to the Governors’ Oversight Committee and/or the Board for final approval ahead of submission to the OfS.
- To support the Steering Group, we have created the APP Operations Group, responsible for all day-to-day aspects of work, pulling together individuals responsible for each area of the Plan.

Wider Outreach & Collaboration

The University is also represented on and works with two collaborative groups (both having presentations, discussions, feedback, and Q&A sessions with the OfS and TASO):

- The **North West Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Group** which is research and evidence informed in line with OfS and TASO expectations; and
- The **FACE APP Special Interest Group**, hosted via the Open University, having representatives across England with similar interests to the North West Group.

Broadening involvement in Assessment of Performance against targets

We are working with the Deans to look at how each CAH-2 area ‘contributes’ to the goals and targets of the Plan. The aim is to close the feedback loop with the Deans and the Lifecycle Leads (for Access, Continuation, Attainment and Progression) to ensure everyone is aware of school-level and provider-level initiatives and how they are aligned and/or could be improved.

Student Engagement

Overview

Our 'Student Engagement Framework' has had a major review and expansion since July 2021. This is to increase understanding of, and engagement with the Plan, including goals, targets, and interventions to close identified gaps. Student feedback is used to inform action plans at modular, programme, service, and operational levels, including programme developments and university-wide initiatives.

As part of our overall student engagement work, we have recruited over 25 students to a 'Student Panel'. Our first student feedback session comprised twenty students, of which 60% identified as BAME, 95% were over 21, 74% were female and 20% had declared a disability.

We are expanding the panel and will continue to aim to recruit a diverse range of students, including those identified as target groups in the Plan.

Student Forums and Focus Groups are made up from members of the Student Panel.

Aside from the Framework, student engagement is detailed in the University's Academic Strategy Green paper from February 2022 (at the consultation stage):

"This Green Paper sets out a broad direction of travel for an academic strategy, with a wording and structure set to elicit a creative response from students and colleagues. Our Students Union will be a particularly important partner in taking forward this academic strategy as the interest of our current and future students form the heart of this draft strategic approach." (para.19).

Consultation

The Framework has been improved and updated in consultation with the Students' Union and our Student Experience, Student Services, Library, and Careers teams.

Our new Student Life Team (leading on student engagement in non-academic areas) in partnership with the Students' Union is facilitating improved student involvement, including a step-by-step consultation process generating feedback and open discussions on the Plan and interventions. Data collection methods cover qualitative and quantitative responses.

Collaboration with the Students' Union

The Student Life team worked with the Students' Union to recruit students for the Student Panel. This resulted in the Students' Union and student representatives being active participants on the panels.

The three steps in this development of student engagement in the Plan are:

Step One: Introduction to the APP

- Gather initial feedback from students on their awareness of the Plan, the importance of it to them and the University as a whole.

Step Two: Student Feedback Forum

- Students are to be actively involved in the consultations for, and design of, interventions.
- An initial Forum was held on early June 2022, face-to-face, and was well-supported by students who provided lengthy and detailed feedback which is currently being analysed. Summaries of each session will be created, and results shared with the Students Union.
- The Students' Union and student representatives will continue to be on panels as we move forwards to offer input and gain student response for action as required.

Step Three: Student Focus Group

- We aim to hold a continuous focus group with a set of students to gather on-going feedback on the Plan, interventions and evaluation.
- This group has been consulted and feedback received on this Variation to our Plan.

Summary

This document covers the improvement, monitoring, and evaluation projects we have been working on, potential and planned changes and/or further improvements, and starts to put our 'context' within the Plan.

Most of this work:

- is not reflected in any detail within our current Plan;
- significantly affects how we implement our current Plan; and
- will inform and shape the new Plan for submission in Summer 2023, whilst defining our particular context.

Provider fee information 2022-23Provider name: The University of Bolton
Provider UKPRN: 10006841**Summary of 2022-23 course fees**

*course type not listed by the provider as available in 2022-23. This means that any such course delivered in 2022-23 would be subject to fees capped at the basic fee amount.

Table 1a - Full-time course fee levels for 2022-23 students

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	*	Fee applies to continuing students only	£9,000
First degree	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£9,250
Foundation degree	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£9,250
Foundation year/Year 0	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£9,250
HNC/HND	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£9,250
CertHE/DipHE	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£9,250
Postgraduate ITT	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£9,250
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£1,850
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 1b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2022-23 students

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	RTC Education Ltd 10008455	Fee applies to continuing students only	£8,100
First degree	RTC Education Ltd 10008455	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£9,250
First degree	Shockout Arts Ltd 10041563	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£9,250
First degree	Spirit SSR Limited 10010457	Fee applies to continuing students only	£9,000
First degree	The Growth Company Limited 10004177	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£8,250
Foundation degree	Bolton College 10000794	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£9,250
Foundation degree	Shockout Arts Ltd 10041563	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£9,250
Foundation degree	The Growth Company Limited 10004177	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£8,250
Foundation year/Year 0	RTC Education Ltd 10008455	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£9,250

Foundation year/Year 0	Shockout Arts Ltd 10041563	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£9,250
HNC/HND	Bolton College 10000794	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£5,996
CertHE/DipHE	Salford City College 10005032	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£8,000
CertHE/DipHE	The Growth Company Limited 10004177	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£8,250
Postgraduate ITT	Aquinas College 10000330	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£8,500
Postgraduate ITT	Salford City College 10005032	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£8,000
Postgraduate ITT	Shockout Arts Ltd 10041563	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£9,250
Postgraduate ITT	The Growth Company Limited 10004177	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£8,250
Accelerated degree	Shockout Arts Ltd 10041563	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£11,100
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 1c - Part-time course fee levels for 2022-23 students

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	*	Fee applies to continuing students only	£6,000
First degree	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,000
Foundation degree	*	Fee applies to continuing students only	£6,000
Foundation degree	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,000
Foundation year/Year 0	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,000
HNC/HND	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,000
CertHE/DipHE	For CertHE in ITT	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£4,500
CertHE/DipHE	For other CertHE	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,000
Postgraduate ITT	*	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£4,500
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Table 1d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2022-23 students

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Cohort:	Course fee:
First degree	RTC Education Ltd 10008455	Fee applies to continuing students only	£4,050
First degree	RTC Education Ltd 10008455	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£4,625

First degree	The Growth Company Limited 10004177 - All other subjects	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£5,200
First degree	The Growth Company Limited 10004177 - Business	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£5,500
Foundation degree	Alliance Learning 10000238	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,000
Foundation degree	Bolton College 10000794	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£4,625
Foundation degree	RTC Education Ltd 10008455	Fee applies to continuing students only	£4,050
Foundation degree	RTC Education Ltd 10008455	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£4,625
Foundation degree	Salford City College 10005032	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,000
Foundation degree	The Growth Company Limited 10004177 - Early Years Childhood Studies	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£6,000
Foundation degree	The Growth Company Limited 10004177 - Healthcare Studies	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£5,500
Foundation year/Year 0	RTC Education Ltd 10008455	Fee applies to continuing students only	£4,050
Foundation year/Year 0	RTC Education Ltd 10008455	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£4,625
HNC/HND	Bolton College 10000794	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£2,996
CertHE/DipHE	Salford City College 10005032	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£4,000
CertHE/DipHE	The Growth Company Limited 10004177	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£3,300
Postgraduate ITT	Aquinas College 10000330	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£4,250
Postgraduate ITT	Salford City College 10005032	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£4,000
Postgraduate ITT	The Growth Company Limited 10004177	Fee applies to entrants/all students	£3,300
Accelerated degree	*	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*

Summary of 2021-22 entrant course fees

*Course type not listed by the provider as available to new entrants in 2021-22. This means that any such course delivered to new entrants in 2021-22 would be subject to fees capped at the basic fee amount.

Inflationary statement:

We will not raise fees annually for 2021-22 new entrants

Table 4a - Full-time course fee levels for 2021-22 entrants

Full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	£9,250
Foundation degree	*	£9,250
Foundation year/Year 0	*	£9,250
HNC/HND	*	£9,250
CertHE/DipHE	*	£9,250
Postgraduate ITT	*	£9,250
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	£1,850
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4b - Sub-contractual full-time course fee levels for 2021-22 students

Sub-contractual full-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	Backstage Academy (training) Ltd 10036456	£9,250
First degree	RTC Education Ltd 10008455	£9,250
First degree	Shockout Arts Ltd 10041563	£9,250
First degree	The Growth Company Limited 10004177	£8,250
Foundation degree	Backstage Academy (training) Ltd 10036456	£9,250
Foundation degree	Shockout Arts Ltd 10041563	£9,250
Foundation degree	The Growth Company Limited 10004177	£8,250
Foundation year/Year 0	RTC Education Ltd 10008455	£9,250
Foundation year/Year 0	Shockout Arts Ltd 10041563	£9,250
HNC/HND	Bolton College 10000794	£5,996
CertHE/DipHE	Salford City College 10005032	£8,000
CertHE/DipHE	The Growth Company Limited 10004177	£8,250
Postgraduate ITT	Aquinas College 10000330	£8,500
Postgraduate ITT	Bolton College 10000794	£7,500
Postgraduate ITT	Salford City College 10005032	£8,000
Postgraduate ITT	Shockout Arts Ltd 10041563	£9,250
Postgraduate ITT	The Growth Company Limited 10004177	£8,250
Accelerated degree	Shockout Arts Ltd 10041563	£11,100
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4c - Part-time course fee levels for 2021-22 entrants

Part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	*	£6,000
Foundation degree	*	£6,000
Foundation year/Year 0	*	£6,000
HNC/HND	*	£6,000
CertHE/DipHE	*	£4,500
CertHE/DipHE	*	£6,000
Postgraduate ITT	*	£4,500
Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Table 4d - Sub-contractual part-time course fee levels for 2021-22

Sub-contractual part-time course type:	Additional information:	Course fee:
First degree	RTC Education Ltd 10008455	£4,625
First degree	The Growth Company Limited 10004177 - All other subjects	£5,200
First degree	The Growth Company Limited 10004177 - Business	£5,500
Foundation degree	Alliance Learning 10000238	£6,000
Foundation degree	RTC Education Ltd 10008455	£4,625
Foundation degree	Salford City College 10005032	£6,000
Foundation degree	The Growth Company Limited 10004177 - Early Years Childhood Studies	£6,000
Foundation degree	The Growth Company Limited 10004177 - Healthcare Studies	£5,500
Foundation year/Year 0	RTC Education Ltd 10008455	£4,625
HNC/HND	Bolton College 10000794	£2,996
CertHE/DipHE	Salford City College 10005032	£4,000
CertHE/DipHE	The Growth Company Limited 10004177	£3,300
Postgraduate ITT	Aquinas College 10000330	£4,250
Postgraduate ITT	Salford City College 10005032	£4,000
Postgraduate ITT	The Growth Company Limited 10004177	£3,300

Accelerated degree	*	*
Sandwich year	*	*
Erasmus and overseas study years	*	*
Other	*	*

Targets and investment plan 2021-22 to 2025-26

Provider name: The University of Bolton

Provider UKPRN: 10006841

Investment summary

The OfS requires providers to report on their planned investment in access, financial support and research and evaluation in their access and participation plan. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in student success and progression in the access and participation plans and therefore investment in these areas is not recorded here.

Note about the data:

The figures in Table 4a relate to all expenditure on activities and measures that support the ambitions set out in an access and participation plan, where they relate to access to higher education. The figures in Table 4b only relate to the expenditure on activities and measures that support the ambitions set out in an access and participation plan, where they relate to access to higher education which is funded by higher fee income. The OfS does not require providers to report on investment in success and progression and therefore investment in these areas is not represented.

The figures below are not comparable to previous access and participation plans or access agreements as data published in previous years does not reflect latest provider projections on student numbers.

Table 4a - Investment summary (£)

Access and participation plan investment summary (£)	Academic year				
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Total access activity investment (£)	£320,451.00	£310,719.00	£307,774.00	£307,774.00	£307,774.00
Access (pre-16)	£55,918.00	£52,025.00	£50,847.00	£50,847.00	£50,847.00
Access (post-16)	£264,533.00	£258,694.00	£256,927.00	£256,927.00	£256,927.00
Access (adults and the community)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Access (other)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Financial support (£)	£193,126.00	£207,357.00	£223,054.00	£239,959.00	£255,657.00
Research and evaluation (£)	£72,666.00	£72,666.00	£72,666.00	£72,666.00	£72,666.00

Table 4b - Investment summary (HFI%)

Access and participation plan investment summary (%HFI)	Academic year				
	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Higher fee income (£HFI)	£19,855,535.00	£21,039,670.00	£21,505,880.00	£20,979,580.00	£22,269,140.00
Access investment	1.6%	1.5%	1.4%	1.5%	1.4%
Financial support	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.1%	1.1%
Research and evaluation	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Total investment (as %HFI)	3.0%	2.8%	2.8%	3.0%	2.9%

Targets and investment plan 2021-22 to 2025-26

Provider name: The University of Bolton

Provider UKPRN: 10006841

Targets

Table 4a - Access

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Underrepresented group	Comparator group (optional)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2021-22 milestones	2022-23 milestones	2023-24 milestones	2024-25 milestones	2025-26 milestones	Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
	PTA_2		IMD quintile 1	IMD quintile 5												

Table 4b - Success

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Underrepresented group	Comparator group (optional)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2021-22 milestones	2022-23 milestones	2023-24 milestones	2024-25 milestones	2025-26 milestones	Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
To remove the gap in continuation between FT UG Black and White students	PTS_1	Ethnicity	Black	White	To remove the gap in continuation between FT UG Black and White students	No	The access and participation dataset	2018-19	Percentage points	4	0	0	0	0	0	Our internal data shows that the gap has been removed and a positive gap between Black and White students in 19/20, therefore we are extending our ambition to have this gap removed by 21/22 and to maintain this position for the duration of this APP.
To remove the gap in continuation between FT UG Asian and White students	PTS_2	Ethnicity	Asian	White	To remove the gap in continuation between FT UG Asian and White students	No	The access and participation dataset	2018-19	Percentage points	3	0	0	0	0	0	The gap has narrowed from 8pp in 17/18 to 3% in 18/19 and we therefore intend to have removed the gap by 21/22 and maintain this position for the duration of this APP.
To reduce the gap in good degree outcomes between YOUNG FT UG P4Q1 and P4Q5 students	PTS_3	Low participation neighbourhood (LPN)	POLAR quintile 1	POLAR quintile 5	To reduce the gap in good degree outcomes between YOUNG FT UG P4Q1 and P4Q5 students	No	The access and participation dataset	2018-19	Percentage points	18	8	7	6	5	4	The gap has widened from 10pp in 17/18 to 18pp in 18/19. Our internal data for 19/20 suggests that this gap is narrowing though and therefore, we are maintaining our target to narrow this gap to 4pp by 25/26 and at the same rate as previously agreed in our 20/21 APP. Note: change to target to specifically reference YOUNG students only as per APP dataset.
To reduce the gap in good degree outcomes between FT UG IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 students	PTS_4	Socioeconomic	IMD quintile 1	IMD quintile 5	To reduce the gap in good degree outcomes between FT UG IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 students	No	The access and participation dataset	2018-19	Percentage points	17	9	8	7	5	4	The gap has narrowed from 25pp in 17/18 to 17pp in 18/19 but our internal data suggests that this may widen again in 19/20. We are, however, extending our ambition to narrow the gap to 4pp by 25/26.
To reduce the gap in good degree outcomes between FT UG Black and White students	PTS_5	Ethnicity	Black	White	To reduce the gap in good degree outcomes between FT UG Black and White students	No	The access and participation dataset	2018-19	Percentage points	18	9	8	7	5	4	The gap has narrowed from 30pp in 17/18 to 18pp in 18/19 but our internal data suggests that this may widen again in 19/20. We are, however, extending our ambition to narrow the gap to 4pp by 25/26.
To remove the gap in good degree outcomes between FT UG Asian and White students	PTS_6	Ethnicity	Asian	White	To remove the gap in good degree outcomes	No	The access and participation dataset	2018-19	Percentage points	18	9	8	6	3	2	The gap has remained the same as 17/18 at 18pp and our internal data suggests that this will widen in 19/20, however we are maintaining our target to reduce the gap to 3pp by 24/25 as per our 20/21 APP and extending this to 2pp by 25/26.
REPLACING PTS_4 : To reduce the gap in good degree outcomes between FT UG IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 students	PTS_7	Socioeconomic	IMD quintile 1	IMD quintile 5	To reduce the gap in good degree outcomes between FT UG IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 students	No	The access and participation dataset	2018-19	Percentage points	14	N/A	8	7	5	4	This replaces PTS_4 which was based on the IMD(2015) measure. This new measure is based on IMD(2019). Whilst in absolute terms, attainment for all quintiles has increased from 2016/7, the gap has remained broadly the same over the period. We recognise this is a very challenging target, but are still committed to reducing the gap.

Table 4c - Progression

Aim (500 characters maximum)	Reference number	Target group	Underrepresented group	Comparator group (optional)	Description (500 characters maximum)	Is this target collaborative?	Data source	Baseline year	Units	Baseline data	2021-22 milestones	2022-23 milestones	2023-24 milestones	2024-25 milestones	2025-26 milestones	Commentary on milestones/targets (500 characters maximum)
To reduce the gap in graduate level employment between FT UG IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 students	PTP_1	Socioeconomic	IMD quintile 1	IMD quintile 5	To reduce the gap in graduate level employment between FT UG IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 students	No	The access and participation dataset	2016-17	Percentage points	17.5	13	11	9	7.5	5	Targets must be reviewed in light of Graduate Outcomes survey and the incomparability of the data with the DLHE data used here.
To reduce the gap in graduate level employment between FT UG Asian and White students	PTP_2	Ethnicity	Asian	White	To reduce the gap in graduate level employment between FT UG Asian and White students	No	The access and participation dataset	2016-17	Percentage points	16	14	12	9	6	4	Targets must be reviewed in light of Graduate Outcomes survey and the incomparability of the data with the DLHE data used here.
REPLACING PTP_1 : To reduce the gap in graduate level employment between FT UG IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 students	PTP_3	Socioeconomic	IMD quintile 1	IMD quintile 5	To reduce the gap in graduate level employment between FT UG IMDQ1 and IMDQ5 students	No	The access and participation dataset	2016-17	Percentage points	17.5	N/A	11	9	7.5	5	This replaces PTP_1 which was using IMD(2015) measures. New target is on IMD(2019) measures. It remains a challenging target, not least due to fluctuations caused by a small FT student populations